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ISRAELI AIRSTRIKES KILL 6, LEVEL FAMILY HOME IN GAZA

Israeli airstrikes killed at least six people across the Gaza Strip and destroyed the home of an extended family early on Wednesday. Despite growing international pressure for a ceasefire, the military said it widened its strikes on militant targets in the Palestinian territory to blunt continuing rocket fire from Hamas. Residents surveyed piles of debris that had once been the home of the al-Astal family in the town of Khan Younis. **P11**

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

Financial Relief of more than
₹ 1250 Crore
Government's timely response to the problems caused by Covid-19 2nd wave

Sri Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India

Sri B.S. Yediyurappa
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka

To benefit Farmers, Barbers, Labourers, Auto-Taxi Drivers and other communities affected by Covid-19 2nd wave

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojane
Total ₹ 180 Crore
Free distribution of 5 kg Rice for May and June to BPL and Antyodaya card holders from the Central Government. Distribution to 30 lakh additional families by the State Government through this Central Government Scheme. (Benefit to 4.34 Crore beneficiaries of 1.26 Ration Cards)

Free food at Indira Canteens
Total ₹ 25.00 Crore
Free food for around 6.00 lakh poor people and labourers in BBMP and city limits.

For Fruit and Vegetable Farmers
Total ₹ 69.00 Crore
Financial aid to 69,000 Fruit and Vegetable Farmers at Rs. 10,000/- per hectare limited to maximum of 1 hectare

For Construction Labourers
Total ₹ 494.00 Crore
Rs. 3,000/- each for Construction Labourers.

For Street Vendors
Total ₹ 44.00 Crore
Rs. 2,000/- each to around 2.20 Lakh Street Vendors (Having registered under Atma Nirbhar Nidhi).

Artists/Cultural Groups - Total ₹ 4.82 Crore
Rs. 3,000/- each to around 16,095 Artists/Cultural Groups.

Free Treatment to Covid Patients
More than ₹ 956 Crore spent
For the first time in the country free treatment given to around 2.06 Covid patients in Govt. and private hospitals during the 1st and 2nd wave.

Grant to 6000 Gram Panchayats
Action for advance of Rs. 50,000/- to each Gram Panchayat from S.D.R.F. Fund for Covid Management.

Distribution of Food Grains
Total ₹ 24.00 Crore
Distribution of 10 kg. Rice Free for May and June to Ration Card holders and applicants who have applied for Ration Card (BPL) and 10 kg. Rice at Rs. 15 per kg. to APL applicants. This will benefit a total of 3.10 lakh applicants.

For Flower Growers - Total ₹ 12.73 Crore
Rs. 10,000/- per hectare for around 20,000 flower growers.

For Auto-Taxi- Maxi Cab Drivers
Total ₹ 63.00 Crore
Rs. 3000/- each to around 2.10 lakh Auto-Taxi- Maxi Cab Drivers (Possessing License and having registration).

Unorganised Labourers
Total ₹ 60.89 Crore
Rs. 2,000/- each for Unorganised Labourers like Barbers, Dhobis, Tailors, Coolies, Rag Pickers, Potters, Kiln Workers, Goldsmiths, Mechanics, Blacksmiths, Housemaids, Cobblers.

Time Extension for installment repayment to small, medium and long-term borrowers
Total ₹ 134.38 Crore
Repayment of small, medium and long-term loans availed by farmers and self help groups from primary agricultural credit co-operative societies and land development banks has been extended from 01-05-2020 to 31-07-2021. This will benefit 4.25 lakh farmers.

Free Vaccination to citizens aged between 18-45 - Total ₹ 1000.00 Crore
Order has been issued for purchase of 3 Crore doses of vaccine to vaccinate all citizens in the age of 18-45 free of cost.

Appointment of Doctors for Covid Treatment
To facilitate Covid treatment appointment of 2,150 Doctors within 3 days.

MASK UP STAY SAFE STAY HEALTHY

As is enshrined in our Constitution, to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India is the fundamental duty of every citizen of the country.

karnataka information
Department of Information of Public Relations

KERALA MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD

(DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE, GOVT. OF KERALA)
Head Office : Thycaud, Thiruvananthapuram-14,
(Telephone No. 0471-2945600, FAX No. 0471-2945647),
E-mail : edrugs@kmscl.kerala.gov.in,
website : www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in, CIN No. U24233KL2007SGC021616

No.KMSCL/ED/142/2021 Date : 18.05.2021

GLOBAL E-TENDER NOTICE

Global Online bids are invited from manufacturers / importers / their Indian Partners on behalf of Department of Health, Govt of Kerala for the procurement of Covid-19 Vaccine for the year 2021-22.

Sl. No.	Tender No. and Date	Tender Quantity
1.	KMSCL/ED/C-VAC/2021/009 dtd. 18/05/2021	30 Million Doses

	Date	Indian Standard Time
Pre-Tender meeting (Online)	25.05.2021	11.00 am.
Last date of online uploading of tender	02.06.2021	5.00 pm.
Date of technical bid opening	05.06.2021	11.00am.

Tenders shall be downloaded and submitted online through the e-tender portal **www.etenders.kerala.gov.in**.

(Sd/-) MANAGING DIRECTOR (Tender Inviting Authority)

HDFC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CORPORATION LTD.

Regd. Office: Ramon House, H T Parekh Marg, 169, Backbay Reclamation, Churchgate, Mumbai-400020 Corporate Identity No. L70100MH1977PLC019916 Branch Address : HDFC House, #51, Kasturba Road, Bangalore-560001. Ph: 41183000/232, Fax: 080-22275754, e-mail: info.bangalore@hdfc.com

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CORPORATION LIMITED.

DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13 (2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of **Housing Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (HDFC Limited)** under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued Demand Notices under Section 13 (2) of the said Act, calling upon the Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) listed hereunder, to pay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice/s, within **60 days** from the date of the respective Notice/s, as per details given below. The undersigned have, caused these Notices to be pasted on the premises of the last known respective addresses of the said Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s). Copies of the said Notices are available with the undersigned, and the said Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) , may, if they so desire, collect the respective copy from the undersigned on any working day during normal office hours.

In connection with the above, Notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) to pay to **HDFC Limited,** within **60 days** from the date of publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated hereinbelow in their respective names, together with further interest @ 18% p.a. as detailed in the said Demand Notices from the respective dates mentioned below in column (c) till the date of payment and / or realisation, read with the loan agreement and other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following Secured Asset(s) have been mortgaged to **HDFC Limited** by the said Borrower (s) respectively.

Sl. No.	Name of Borrower(s) /Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s)	Loan A/c No. And Total Outstanding Dues	Description of Immovable property / Secured Asset
(a)	(b)	(C)	(F)
1.	**1) Mr. Sanjay Hegde Y G (Borrower)** No.42, G D Park Extension, 15th Cross, Vyalikaval Extension, Near Basyam Circle Vyalikaval, Bengaluru-560003. **Also at:** No.21, 1st Main Road, Near Basyam Circle Vyalikaval, Malleswaram, Bengaluru 560003. **Also at:** Sical Logistics Ltd., **Designation:** Senior Manager **Departyment:** Marketing ***Employee No.:*** 2889 No.23/2, Coffee Day Square, Vittal Mallya Road, Bangalore Bazar, Bengaluru 560001. **Also at:** Flat -G-06, Ground Floor, Nisarga Sarovara Apartment, Plot 1 to 39, S No 49, Sector, Bannahalli Village, Ward Banahalli-Bommasandra, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Tq, Bengaluru 560100.	**Loan A/c No 624431616 Rs.26,87,547/- Due as on 31.03.2021** Date of Demand Notice (d) 23.04.2021 Date of NPA (e) 31.03.2021	**Schedule-A:** All that piece and parcel of converted property bearing Sy.No.49, measuring 2 Acres 8 Guntas of Land equivalent to 95832 feet, situated at Bannahalli, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Urban District, converted as per order of Special Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District vide ref.No.BDS: ALN(A) SR;11/05-06 dated 19.04.2005 and the plan is approved for construction of Multistoried Residential Apartments by the BMRDA vide its ref:No. BMRDA/ Anekal Planing Authority/ LAO/68/05-06 dated 24.11.2007, plan Approval from Secretary, Bommasandra Grama Panchayath Plan approval dated 12.03.2010 and modified Plan sanction Ref.No.BMRDA/Anekal/Planing Authority/ LAO/68/2005-06 dated 23.07.2013 the entire extent of land is bounded on: **East by :** Road, **West by:** Raja Kaluve, **North by:** Jayaramreddy Property, **South by:** Ramaswamy Reddy Property. **Schedule-B:** All that Residential Apartment bearing **No.G 06 Ground Floor** with The E Katha No.150200101400220043 project known as **'NISARGA SAROVARA'** built in Schedule 'A'Property and apartment measuring **1384 Sq. Feet of super built up area** approximately inclusive of balconies, utility areas such as passages, lobbies, lifts, staircases and other areas of common use with **One Car Parking Space** in the Basement floor together with **457 Sq. Feet undivided share**, right title, interest and ownership in the Schedule 'A' Property and the apartment bounded by: **East by:** Open Place, **West by:** Flat No.G 07, **North by:** Flat No.G 05, **South by:** Open Place.
2.	**1) Mr. Yogesh S (Borrower)** No.543, Kaveripura Main Road, Kamakshipalya, Basaweshwarnagar, Agrahara Dasarahalli, Bengaluru 560079. **Also at:** Capgemini Technology Services India Limited **Designation:** Consultant **Department:** IT **Employee No:** 178215 No.158, 162, 165, 170 (P) EPIP, White Field, Phase II, Bengaluru 560066. **Also at:** Plot 6, House 6, Assessment No.44/1, Katha No.9, Gollarapalya Village, Yeshwanthpura Hobli, Bengaluru 560091 **2) Mrs. Lakshmamma (Co-Borrower)** No.543, Kaveripura Main Road, Kamakshipalya, Basaweshwarnagar, Agrahara Dasarahalli, Bengaluru 560079. **Also at:** Plot 6, House 6, Assessment No.44/1, Katha No.9, Gollarapalya Village, Yeshwanthpura Hobli, Bengaluru 560091	**1) Loan A/c No 642811111 Rs.32,59,202/- 2) Loan A/c No 645882212 Rs.1,70,651/- Due as on 31.03.2021** Date of Demand Notice (d) 29.04.2021 Date of NPA (e) 31.03.2021	All that piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing Vacant Site No.6, in Assessment No.44/1, in a layout formed in amalgamated property of Assessment No.44/1 and Assessment No.44/3 bearing Khatha No.9 situated at Hosahalli Gollarapalya Village, Yeshwanthapura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk measuring **East to West: 30 feet and North to South: 40 Feet, totally measuring 1200 Sqft.,** And bounded on: **East by:** Site bearing No.5, **West by:** Site bearing No.7, **North by:** 30 feet wide Road, **South by:** Private Property.
3.	**1) Mrs. S Sree Revathy (Borrower)** Plot 15 And 16, S No.11/3, House 15 And 16, Khatha No.157/158/42/43/11/3/10/15/16, Byatarayanpura Village, Yelahanka, Bengaluru 560064 **Also at:** Aster DM Health Care Private Limited **Designation:** Consultant, No.43/2, Aster Cauvery, Bellary Road, Sahakar Naga, Sahakaranagar P.O, Bengaluru 560092. **Also at:** Plot 23 & 24 In Port of Prop-105, Khatha BBMP NO.69/105/23/24, Presently BBMP Katha No.786/69/105/23/24, Thirumenahalli Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Jakkur Ward No.5, Bengaluru 560045. **Also at:** Plot No.23,24,25 & 26, S No.105, Katha No.105/23/24/25/26, Thirumenahalli Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bengaluru 560064. **2) M/s Sreeva Nest LLP (Co-Borrower) Represented by Mrs.S Sree Revathy** No.23, Sree Villa, Thirumenahalli Main Road, Yelahanka, Jakkur, Bengaluru 560064. **Also at:** Plot 23 & 24 In Port of Prop-105, Khatha BBMP NO.69/105/23/24, Presently BBMP Katha No.786/69/105/23/24, Thirumenahalli Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Jakkur Ward No.5, Bengaluru 560045. **Also at:** Plot No.23,24,25 & 26, S No.105, Katha No.105/23/24/25/26, Thirumenahalli Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bengaluru 560064. **3) M/s Sreeva Healthcare Private Limited (Co- Borrower) Represented by Mrs.S Sree Revathy** No.23, Sree Villa, Thirumenahalli Main Road, Yelahanka, Jakkur, Bengaluru 560064. **Also at:** Plot 15 And 16, S No.11/3, House 15 And 16, Khatha No.157/158/42/43/11/3/10/15/16, Byatarayanpura Village, Yelahanka, Bengaluru 560064	**1) Loan A/c No 639282168 Rs.62,66,827/- 2) Loan A/c No 640010231 Rs.2,22,06,405/- 3) Loan A/c No 641004997 Rs.1,36,228/- totally accuring Rs.2,86,09,460/- (RupeesTwo Crore Eighty Six lakhs Nine Thousand Four Hundred and sixty only) Due as on 31.03.2021** Date of Demand Notice (d) 15.04.2021 & Corrigendum Demand Notice Date 12.05.2021 Date of NPA (e) 31.03.2021	All that piece and parcel of the property bearing Site No.23 & 24, in portion of Property No.105, Presently BBMP Katha No.69/105/23/24, New BBMP Khatha No.786/69/105/23/24, situated Thirumenahalli Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore. Measuring East to West 34 Feet and North to South 75 Feet, Totally measuring 2550 Square feet along with all constructions thereon and bounded as: **East by:** Road, **West by:** Private Property, **North by:** Property bearing Site No.25, **South by:** Private Property.

*with further interest @ 18% p.a. as applicable, incidental expenses, costs, charges etc incurred till the date of payment and / or realization.

If the said Borrowers shall fail to make payment to **HDFC Limited** as aforesaid, then **HDFC Limited** shall proceed against the above Secured Asset(s) / Immovable Property (ies) under Section 13 (4) of the said Act and the applicable Rules entirely at the risk of the said Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) as to the costs and consequences.

The said Borrower (s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) are prohibited under the said Act to transfer the aforesaid Secured Asset (s) / Immovable Property (ies), whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of **HDFC Limited.** Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the Act or Rules made thereunder shall be liable for imprisonment and/or penalty as provided under the Act.

Place: Bangalore
Date: 20.05.2021

Sd/- Authorized Officer HDFC LIMITED
Under the SARFAESI ACT, 2002

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No. M/SG.2021-22-241 and E-Tender Notice No. M/SG.2021-22-242.

Sr.DSTE/Co-ordn/MAS acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders for the following works:

Sl.No. 1. **E-Tender No.:** M/SG.2021-22-241. **Name of work:** Signaling works in connection with conversion of points from Manual to machine operation at Puttur and Minjur and removal of manually operated points at Ponpadi along with alterations to interlocking in AJJ-RU and MAS-GDR section of MAS Division in view of increase of speed in GQ/GD routes. **Approx. Cash Value (Rs.):** 72.5 Lakhs. **Period of Completion:** 08 Months.

Sl. No. 2. **E-Tender No.:** M/SG.2021-22-242. **Name of Work:** Signaling works in connection with Deep screening of Points and Crossings by BCM/Manual in AJJ-JTJ and AJJ-RU Section of the Chennai Division. **Approx. Cash Value (Rs.):** 47 Lakhs. **Period of Completion:** 12 Months.

The complete details of the tender can be downloaded from the e-tender portal https://www.ireps.gov.in and can be seen on the Notice Board at the office of **Senior Divisional Signal and Tele Communication Engineer/Co-ordn, Chennai Division, DRM Office, Chennai - 600003.**

Senior Divisional Signal and Tele Communication Engineer/ Signal, Chennai Division, Chennai - 600 003.

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KMML The Kerala Minerals & Metals Ltd.

(A Govt. of Kerala Undertaking)
(An ISO 9001, ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001 & SA 8000 Certified Company)
Sankaramangalam, Chavara - 691 583, Kollam, Kerala, India
Phone : +91-476- 2651215 to 2651217.
Fax : +91- 0476- 2680101, 2686721.
E-mail : contact@kmml.com, URL:www.kmml.com CIN-U14109KL1972SGC002399

Competitive Tenders are invited for following. For more details please visit the E-Tendering Portal. https://etenders.kerala.gov.in or www.kmml.com

No	Tender ID	Items
1.	2021_KMML_423111_1	For fabrication and supply of 1 No. Vessel for Bag Filter S304/305

Chavara
19.05.2021

Sd/-
DGM(Mtls)
For The Kerala Minerals And Metals Ltd

Our Products: Titanium Dioxide, Titanium Tetra Chloride, Nano Titanium, Titanium Sponge, Rutile, Zircon & Sillimanite

V.O.Chidambaranar Port Trust

Civil Engineering Department, Tuticorin- 628 004.
SAGARMALA

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)

Only through E-Tendering Mode VOCPT E-Tendering Website:www.tenderwizard.com/VOCPT

NIT No & Dated	No. E(C) -56/7/ 2021 – EST Dated:19.05.2021

V.O. Chidambaranar Port Trust invites Offers/ bids from the experienced and reputed firms / person for Allotment of port land for 30 years lease period on upfront payment basis in V.O.Chidambaranar Port for promoting industries under Coastal Employment Unit (CEU)

Downloading of Tender document from website	From 21.05.2021 to 21.06.2021
Last date & Time of submission of tender online	21.06.2021 at 15:00 Hrs.
Opening of Technical Bid online Date & Time	21.06.2021 at 15:30 Hrs.

For Further details, please visit www.vocport.gov.in and www.tenderwizard.com / VOCPT

Sd/- 19.05.2021
CHIEF ENGINEER & ESTATE OFFICER

BENGALURU URBAN, BENGALURU RURAL & RAMANAGARA DIST. CO-OP. MILK PRODUCERS' SOCIETIES UNION LIMITED

Bamul

Bangalore Dairy, D.R. College Post, Dr. M.H. Marigowda Road, Bengaluru-560029.
Ph: 080-26096258, Fax: 080-25536597. e-mail: bamulengg@yahoo.com, website: www.bamulnandini.coop

TECHNICAL AND COMMERCIAL TENDER OF WORKS PART-1
TENDER INVITATION (I F T)

IFT No. BAMUL/M(E)/E-Tender/PW-03/35/44/10/2021-22 Date: 19-05-2021

E-TENDER NOTICE

Tender are invited through e-procurement portal from eligible tenderers registered in PWD Department / Central PWD Department / M.E.S Departments at the following places at Bangalore Milk Union Ltd. Work details and schedule is given in the Table below. The Earnest Money Deposit (E.M.D.) should be valid for 45 days beyond the validity of the tender. Earnest money deposit will have to be paid in any one of the forms as specified in the tender document through e-procurement portal only.

Sl. No.	Name of Works	Construction of new UG Tank of capacity 1lakh ltr & Repair work of old UG Tank & Overhead tank in Quarters, Dairy Colony, Bengaluru	Providing and fixing 6 passenger lift and UPVC windows in Admin block at Bamul Premises, Bengaluru	Providing G I roofing for Record room above P&I office
1	Package No.	KW-1	KW-2	KW-2
2	Contractors Grade	Class-3 and above	Class-2 and above	Class-2 and above
3	Estimated cost of work (in Rs.)	14,99,647.00	25,00,000.00	34,63,632.00 + GST (18%)
4	EMD amount (in Rs.)	38,000.00	50,000.00	70,000.00
5	Period of completion	60 Days (Including Monsoon)	90 Days (Including Monsoon)	60 Days (Including Monsoon)
6	Access to E- Tender Portal only	From 12.05.2021 to 29.05.2021 upto 5.30 PM	From 15.05.2021 to 29.05.2021 upto 5.30 PM	From 20.05.2021 to 03.06.2021 upto 5.30 PM
7	Last date for tender Queries	25.05.2021 upto 2.30 PM	27.05.2021 upto 2.30 PM	01.06.2021 upto 2.30 PM
8	Last date & time for Submission of Tenders	26.05.2021 upto 5.30 PM	29.05.2021 upto 5.30 PM	03.06.2021 upto 5.30 PM
9	Date & time for opening of Technical Tender (Part-I)	28.05.2021 upto 2.30 PM	31.05.2021 upto 2.30 PM	04.06.2021 upto 2.30 PM
10	Date & time for opening of Commercial Tender (Part-II) : **Will be informed to successful tenderer**			
11	Place of pre-bid meeting, opening of Technical / Commercial Bid	**Bamul, Board Room, Dr. M.H. Marigowda Road, Bengaluru-560029**		

More details on the tender are available in e-procurement portal **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/- Managing Director
Tender Inviting Authority, Bangalore Milk Society Union Limited

Central Bank Of India

Regional Office, Santosh Cinema Complex, Kempe Gowda Road, Bangalore-560 009. Phone: 080-22385544, 2265652-53-54, Fax: 080-22258581 Email : recovbangro@centralbank.co.in

DEMAND NOTICE U/S 13 (2) OF THE SECURIISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENTOF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002,

1) We have, at your request, granted to you various credit limits at our Bangalore Cantonment Branch, and we give below full details of various credit facilities granted by us .As the demand notice sent by regular AD calling upon you to make payment of the below mentioned amount was un-served/un-acknowledged, this notice is now issued.

2) We inform you that you have defaulted in repayment of entire amount mentioned below (which represents the principal plus interest as on the date mentioned) plus further interest.

3) As you have defaulted in repayment of your full liabilities, we have classified your dues as Non Performing Asset as on **31/03/2021** in accordance with the directions or guidelines issued by the R.B. I

4) We also inform you that in spite of our repeated demand notices & oral requests for repayment of the entire amount due to us, you have not so far paid the same.

5) You are aware that the various limits granted by us are secured by the below Mentioned assets/ security agreements (secured assets).

06) For the reasons stated above, we hereby call upon you to discharge in full your liabilities to us within a period of 60 days from the date of receipt of notice, failing which we will be exercising the powers under Section 13(4) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and enforcement of security interest Act, 2002, against the secured assets mentioned above. The powers available to us under section 13 of the Act, interalia, includes power to (i) take possession of the secured assets of the borrower including the right to transfer by way of lease, assignment or sale for realizing the secured asset, (ii) take over the management of the business of the borrower including the right to transfer by way of lease, assignment or sale and realize the secured asset,(iii) appoint any person as Manager to manage the secured assests the possession of which has been taken over by us (secured creditor) and any transfer of secured asset by us shall vest in the transferee all rights in, or in relation to the secured asset transferred as if the transfer had been made by you. (iv) require at any time by notice in writing, any person who has acquired any of the secured assets from you and from whom any money is due or may become due to you, to pay to us (secured creditor), so much of the money as is sufficient to pay the secured debt.

7). The amount realized from the exercising of the powers mentioned above, will first be applied in payment of all costs, charges and expenses which in the opinion of us have been properly incurred by us or any expenses incidental thereto, and secondly applied in discharge of the dues of us as mentioned above with contractual interest from the date of this notice till the date of actual realization and the residue of the money, if any, shall be paid to you.

8) Please take note that after receipt of this notice, you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise any of the secured assets referred to in this notice, without prior written consent of the secured creditor. We draw your attention to section 29 of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, which awards imprisonment upto one year, or with fine, or with both, if you contravene the provisions of the Act.

9) We also inform you that, if the dues of us are not fully satisfied with the sale proceeds of the secured assets, we reserve our right to proceed against you before Debts Recovery Tribunal/Courts for recovery of the balance amount from you.

10) Your attention is invited to provisions of sub sec(8) of sec (13) of the act in respect of time available to you to redeem the secured assets.

Borrowers Name : (1) M/S Sree Skanda Granite C/O Reliance Stationary Mart, No. 55, Commercial Street, Shivaji Nagar, Bangalore – 560001**(2) M/S Sree Skanda Granite,**Survey No. 81/4 , Original Survey No. 81/5 of Andagove Village, Sunticoppa Nadu, Somwarpet Taluk, Kodagu District, Karnataka.**(3) Sri S.K.Rajkumar C/O Reliance Stationary Mart,** No. 55, Commercial Street, Shivaji Nagar, Bangalore – 560001.**Sri S.K.Rajkumar,** Survey No. 81/4 , Original Survey No. 81/5 of Andagove Village, Sunticoppa Nadu, Somwarpet Taluk, Kodagu District, Karnataka. **Sri S.K.Rajkumar,** No. 17/A, Capt. Munishi Layout, Bangalore-560084, Sri S.K.Rajkumar, 80 Robertson Road, Frazer Town, Banalore-560005. **(4) Smt. Indu Rajkumar C/O Reliance Stationary** Mart, No. 55, Commercial Street, Shivaji Nagar, Bangalore – 560001, **Smt. Indu Rajkumar,** Survey No. 81/4 , Original Survey No. 81/5 of Andagove Village, Sunticoppa Nadu, Somwarpet Taluk, Kodagu District, Karnataka. **Smt. Indu Rajkumar No.** 17/A, Capt. Munishi Layout, Bangalore-560084 Smt. Indu Rajkumar 80 Robertson Road, Frazer Town, Banalore-560005.

OUTSTANDING AMOUNT, a)CASH CREDIT Loan- with a limit of Rs.90,00,000/- (Rupees: Ninety Lakhs Only) sanctioned on 13/02/2012 favoring M/S Sree Skanda Granite , Partners Sri S.K. Rajkumar & Smt. Indu Rajkumar -A/c No:3165926747

b)Term Loan (FITL COVID-19) with a Limit of Rs.560929/-(Rs. Five Lakhs Sixty Thousand Nine Hundred Twenty Nine Only) sanctioned on 10.11.2020 (On account of interest charged in Cash Credit account no 3165926747 during the period from 01.03.2020 to 31.08.2020 due to COVID 19 pandemic) favoring M/S Sree Skanda Granite ,Partners Sri S.K. Rajkumar & Smt. Indu Rajkumar - A/c No:4062504858.

Total Amount Due: Rs.1,00,91,275/- (Rs.9,50,9907 + Rs.5,81,368/-), due to us as on 28/04/2021 (date of this notice) you have merely paid Rs. NIL /No credit received, and hence you have defaulted in repayment of an amount of Rs.1,00,91,275/- (which represents the principal plus interest due on the date of this notice). Or **Rs.1,00,91,275/-** (Rupees: One Crore Ninety One Thousand Two Hundred seventy Five Only) due to us as on 28/04/2021 you have defaulted in repayment of entire amount of Rs.1,00,91,275/- (Rupees: One Crore Ninety One Thousand Two Hundred seventy Five Only)due to us as on 28/04/2021 plus further interest/Charges there on.

Date of Demand Notice : 28/04/2021

SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY/SECURED ASSET: 10 Acres of Sagu Bane and 2 Acres of converted Quarry Land in Survey No. 81/4 , Original Survey No. 81/5 of Andagove Village, Sunticoppa Nadu, Somwarpet Taluk, Kodagu District, Karnataka. Boundaries of the Property: East by :Survey No. 81/6, West BY : Survey No. 80,North by : Survey No. 12,South by : Survey No. 81/1,82/2 & Road.

Date:19.05.2021
BANGALORE

Sd/- AUTHORISED OFFICER
CENTRAL BANK OF INDIA

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike

Office of the Executive Engineer, Padmanabhanagara Division, Opp. to Sagar Hospitals, Kumaraswamy Layout, Bengaluru-560 078.

No.EE(PN)/TEND/01/2021-22 Date: 19-05-2021

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Through GOK e-Procurement Portal Only)

Tenders on item rate basis are invited by Zonal Commissioner, BBMP for the works mentioned below from the registered contractors of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike or equivalent registration with CPWD/KPWD/ Railways/MES or any State Government Organisations.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	EMD (in Rs.)
1.	Establishment of temporary control room for mansoon period in Padmanabhanagara Sub Division.	EMD Exempted (If EMD Declaration Form Submitted) as per GOK Order No: ಆಇ 675 Cost - 12/2020, Bengaluru, Date: 22-12-2020 and Commissioner, BBMP Office Order No: Commissioner/ PR/E-9251/2020-21, Date: 30-01-2021.
2.	Establishment of temporary control room for mansoon period in Banashankari Sub Division.	

Calendar of Events: (1) Last Date for uploading the Filled proposals is **28-05-2021 up to 4:00 p.m. (2)** Date of Opening of Financial Proposals is **29-05-2021 after 4:30 p.m.** Further particulars can be obtained from the above office during working hours on working days or from **website: https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Padmanabhanagara Division, BBMP.

HAVE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19? CALL APTHAMITRA ON 14410
Wear Mask | 6 Feet Follow Physical Distancing | Maintain Hand Hygiene

केनरा बैंक Canara Bank
(A Government Of India Undertaking)

Vidyaranyapura Branch (BIC 10481)
No 844, Opp Post Office, 5th Block, BEL Layout, Vidyaranyapura, Bengaluru-560097
Tel: 080- 23645985
E-mail: cb10481@canarabank.com

DEMAND NOTICE [SECTION 13(2)]
TO BORROWER/ GUARANTOR/MORTGAGOR

NOTICE ISSUED UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002

'We, **Canara Bank, Vidyaranyapura Branch** had issued Demand Notices under Section 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Security Interest Act 2002 by Registered Post with Acknowledgment Due (RPAD) to the addresses furnished to the Bank as mentioned below. Since the notice has not been acknowledgement returned due to non-availability of addressees at the said addresses / due to evading of service of the notices sent by RPAD, notice could not be served. Further, Bank had served the said demand notices by affixture at the addresses given. The contents of the said notices are mentioned herein below.

Name and Address of the Borrower / Co-Borrower / Mortgagor / Guarantor : 1) Smt. T. Susheelamma W/o Sri. N Krishnappa 9663179598, No. 626 Maharaja Street Muniswamappa Udayanagar D V Nagar Post, Bangalore-560016 **And Also At** No.16, BBMP Khatha No. 91/16, Opposite Govt. Hospital, Thindlu Village, Vidyarnyapura, Bangalore-560097, **2) Sri. Krishnappa N** S/o Sri. Nanjundappa, No. 626, Maharaja Street Udayanagar D V Nagar, Muniswamy Layout, Bangalore-560016, **And Also At** No.16, BBMP Khatha No. 91/16, Opposite Govt. Hospital, Thindlu Village, Vidyarnyapura, Bangalore-560097, **Guarantor: Sri N Kempanna** S/o Late Nanjundappa No. 30 GKVK Road, Near Samdaya Bhavan, Vidyaranyapura, Bangalore-560097.

[Details of the credit facility/ies availed by the Borrower]

Loan No.	Nature of Loan/Limit	Date of Sanction	Amount	Liability With Interest As On Date 31.03.2021	Rate Of Interest
0481774 0000156	Housing Loan	03.08.2021	Rs. 15,00,000/-	Rs.14,21,952.09	9.35%
0481774 0000207	Housing Loan	11.02.2012	Rs. 3,00,000/-	Rs.2,81,950.42	9.35%

Total Liability Amount: Rs.17,03,902.51 (Rupees Seventeen Lakhs Three Thousand Nine Hundred Two and Paisa Fifty One Only) with further cost and charges and incidental expenses and costs.

NPA Date : 30.03.2021 **Demand Notice Dated : 05.04.2021**

Details of security assets: Name of Title holder: Smt. T Susheelamma. All The Piece And Parcel Of The Property Bearing No 16, Form B Khatha No.381/16, Present BBMP Khatha No. 91/16, Thindlu Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore Measuring East To West: 30 Feet And North To South 40 Feet Owned By T Susheelamma And Bounded On: North By: Vacant Land, South By: Road, East By: Site No. 17, West By: Site No. 13.

You are here by called upon to pay **Canara Bank,** within a period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice, the respective amount mentioned here above, failing which **Canara Bank** will take necessary action under the provisions of the said Act, against the secured assets including taking possession of the secured assets of the Borrowers and the Guarantors. The powers available to **Canara Bank** under the Act include (i) power to take possession of the secured assets of the Borrower / Guarantors / Mortgager including the rights to transfer by way of lease, assignment or sale for realising secured assets and any transfer of secured assets by **Canara Bank** shall vest in the transferee rights in or in relation to, the secured asset transferred as if the transfer has been made by you. In terms of the provisions of section 13(13) of the said Act, you are hereby prohibited from transferring, either by way of sale, lease or otherwise (other than in the ordinary course of your business), any of the secured assets as referred to in the Demand Notice affixed and also Hypothecated / Mortgaged to the bank without prior written consent of the Bank. The notice is issued in terms of Section (13)2 of the said Act.

Date : 19.05.2021
Place : Bangalore

Sd/- Authorised Officer
Canara Bank

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BENGALURU • THURSDAY • MAY 20, 2021 • ₹7.00 • PAGES 18 • LATE CITY EDITION

Doctors operating on a patient with black fungus infection at Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur Medical College Hospital on Wednesday | PTI

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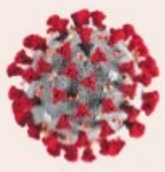


RAJASTHAN GOVT DECLARES BLACK FUNGUS AN EPIDEMIC

Wednesday's declaration came after case count touched 100. A separate ward has been created at a Jaipur hospital

DIABETES PATIENTS AT HIGHER INFECTION RISK

Deaths due to mucormycosis — colloquially called black fungus — among Covid patients have been reported across states like Kerala (10+), Haryana (5) and UP (2). It is a common fungus in soil and decaying vegetation, but rarely affects those with strong immune system. In Covid patients, those with uncontrolled diabetes or on immunosuppression are at higher risk

STEROID USE LINKED TO FUNGUS' SPREAD

- It can affect any organ, including skin or eye. A surgery or removal of the affected organ may be required to contain the spread
- There is no scientific evidence that oxygen pipes or humidifier are sources of its origin. It is not contagious, but has high morbidity
- Diabetes care and avoiding steroids can help arrest the infection

50%
DEATH RATE ONCE THE BLACK FUNGUS INFECTION IS CONTRACTED

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

RURAL CASELOAD SPURT IS A BIG HEALTHCARE CHALLENGE

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

IF metros and big cities bore the brunt of the first wave of Covid-19 last year, the second wave seems to be choking rural India in a way not seen before. According to a recent SBI report, the share of rural districts in new cases has been steadily increasing – from 36.8% in March to 45.5% in April and 48.5% in May. Alarmingly, the fatality rate in interior regions is also high owing to lack of easy access to medical care, shortage of life-saving drugs, and lack of awareness, among other reasons.

In Punjab, for example, 46% of the active coronavirus cases are from rural areas. Data show that interior regions account for 55% of the overall Covid deaths in the state. During May 1-15, as many as 55,411 cases were reported from Punjab's 16 rural districts while the total infections in the state were 1,20,723. Out of 2,618 deaths in Punjab during the period, 1,434 were from rural areas. Likewise, 43% of Haryana's Covid cases were from rural areas in the first two weeks of May. Also, 62% of the Covid deaths were from the 15 predominantly rural districts of the state. During May 1-15, as many as 84,242 cases were reported from these districts, while the total cases across the state stood at 1,97,334. In terms of deaths, the figure is 1,456 from rural areas out of the state's total of 2,330.

UTTARAKHAND
100% JUMP IN ACTIVE CASES FROM RURAL AREAS

Bihar has a peculiar problem. Nearly 89% of the state's 13.12 crore population live in its 45,103 villages. In the second Covid wave, 76% of the total cases in the state are from rural areas. According to sources, at least 50% of the population in remote districts like Jamui, Aurangabad, Muzaffarpur, etc could be infected. "The actual degree of rural spread could be much higher, as access and willingness for testing is limited," said Dr Vikash R Keshri, a health policy expert.

Covid-19 is surging ahead in rural Bengal, too, with health department officials conceding that the situation in at least 18 districts is grim. For example, West Midnapore recorded 268 cases on May 1. The count went up to 653 on May 7 and 829 on May 15. Similarly, 74 new cases were recorded on May 1 in Jhargram. It jumped to 124 on May 8 and to 178 on May 15.

In Andhra, while rural areas have been reporting more Covid-19 cases than urban regions, interior areas seem to have a slightly lesser fatality rate. According to data for April, the case load was higher in rural areas compared to urban. Of the 1.46 lakh cases reported, 56% of them, accounting for 81,365 cases, were in rural areas while the urban areas accounted for 44%. Explaining the reason, Principal Secretary (Health) Anil Kumar Singhal said the enforcement of partial curfew or restrictions would be more effective in urban areas and cities but not so in hinterlands. CONTINUED ON: P10

PMEAC PLAN

Fresh push for 1-time hike in corporate tax

ANURADHA SHUKLA @New Delhi

A controversial proposal to tax the rich is back on the table, with a section of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) strongly pushing to impose additional tax for a short period to make up for the revenue loss during the pandemic.

"In the internal economic review meeting, many members of the PMEAC had suggested that many countries are using wealth tax to compensate for revenue. The proposal was that India can reconsider it for companies that are resilient or had posted a healthy double-digit growth as one-time measure," a senior finance ministry official, who was aware of the meeting earlier this month, said. The meeting was attended by officials of the finance ministry, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), PMEAC and Niti Aayog. Some officials of the finance ministry are also in favour of the proposal, the officer said.

This is not the first time the rich tax has been mooted. When the proposal to slash corporate tax was first drafted, it had a wealth tax component on high profit earning firms. But in the final draft by then revenue secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey, the wealth tax clause was dropped.

Ahead of this year's budget, the proposal was back on the table but was decisively rejected by the PMO, which wanted to present a business friendly image.

According to Karthik Natarajan, partner, Bhuta Shah & Co. LLP, "The temptation, however easy, to load the thrust of taxes on a section of economic citizenry may best be avoided as the corporates are an inseparable part of the society and have larger contributions to make in terms of productive deployment of the factors of production."

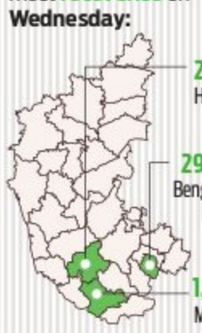
ASHA OF PROTECTION

ASHA workers and nurses engaged in door-to-door Covid survey checking oxygen saturation of children, in Mysuru on Wednesday | UDAYSHANKARS

FROM ACROSS THE STATE

5,58,890 TOTAL ACTIVES CASES
26.46% POSITIVITY RATE
1,14,28,711 TOTAL VACCINATIONS
1,29,538 SAMPLES TESTED ON WEDNESDAY

Top three districts with most recoveries on Wednesday:



- A pourakarmika dies allegedly due to non-availability of ICU/ventilator bed in Mysuru
- Unauthorised oximeters found being sold across several pharmacies in Davanagere
- JSW Group's 1,000-bed oxygenated CCC and district field hospital opens in Ballari

K'taka govt announces ₹1,250 cr relief package

Announcement on lockdown extension on May 23, says CM

ANUSHA RAVI @Bengaluru

TO help citizens who have lost their livelihoods and incurred losses due to the Covid second wave lockdown, the Karnataka Government announced an economic relief package on Wednesday. Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa said at ₹1,250 crore, the economic package includes financial compensation, food security and extension of loan repayment schedules to the most vulnerable sections of society in the State.

The package, although nearly half the size of financial assistance of ₹2,284 crore announced by the Yediyurappa government in 2020 during the first lockdown, aims to mitigate the adverse impact of restrictions and lockdown in the State since April 24. The announcement comes after pressure from opposition parties, various associations, media and citizens groups.

"The package is to help farmers and unorganised sector workers. It comes at a cost of over ₹1,250 crore. Despite the financial crunch we are facing, we are announcing the package," Yediyurappa said.

While giving details of the package, the chief minister also said that the announcement on extension of the present lockdown will be made on May 23.

Opposition Congress and JDS termed the relief package as unscientific and inadequate. Congress Legislature Party leader Siddaramaiah said it is just an eyewash and the state should have taken a cue from the neighbouring states that have announced a much better packages. JDS senior leader HD Kumaraswamy said, "The Kerala government had announced ₹20,000 crore package. Karnataka is a bigger state and how can a ₹1,200 crore package be adequate?"

The CM said that ₹10,000 compensation has been announced for floriculture and horticulture farmers for losses due to the lockdown with a cap on one hectare. Some 20,000 floriculturists and 69,000 horticulturists are expected to benefit from this.

"Licensed and registered auto drivers and cab drivers will be given ₹3,000 financial assistance. About 2.10 lakh people are estimated to benefit and this will cost an estimated Rs 36 crore. ₹3,000 will be transferred to the bank accounts of construction workers registered with the Karnataka Building and Other Constructions Workers' Welfare Board which will cost ₹494 crore," he said. P5

THE PACKAGE ₹ **Total outlay: ₹1,250 crore (including funds from SDRF to villages)**

- **₹10,000** per hectare for floriculturists
- **₹10,000** per hectare for horticulturists with a cap of one hectare
- **₹3,000** for registered auto, taxi and maxi-cab drivers
- **₹3,000** for registered construction workers
- **₹2,000** for unorganised sector workers
- **₹2,000** for street vendors/hawkers
- **₹3,000** for artists

Extending free rice scheme under PMGKY to additional 30 lakh beneficiaries for May and June

Extending repayment schedule for loans availed by farmers and SHGs at PACS and land banks from May 1, 2020, to July 31, 2021

Free 15 kg foodgrains for those awaiting BPL cards and 10 kg subsidised foodgrains at ₹15 per kg to those awaiting APL cards

Free food distribution at Indira Canteens for the urban poor. ₹50,000 from SDRF to 600 gram panchayats for Covid management

KARNATAKA	MAY 18	MAY 19
Fresh cases	30,309	34,281
Recoveries	58,395	49,953
Deaths	525	468

JAB-O-METER
TAKE YOUR SHOT
May 18: **12,79,896 doses**
May 19: **11,45,569 doses**
TOTAL DOSES: 18,69,89,265

NATIONWIDE	MAY 18	MAY 19
Fresh cases	2,63,533	2,67,334
Recoveries	4,22,436	3,89,851
Deaths	4,329	4,529

HC notice to State, EC on relief to Covid-hit poll staff

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court issued notices to the Election Commission of India (ECI), State Government and the State Election Commission (SEC) on a PIL, seeking compensation to the families of polling staff, who have died of Covid after being part of the bypolls and elections to Urban Local Bodies in the State.

A division bench of Justices Satish Chandra Sharma and M Nagaprasanna issued the notices after hearing the petition filed by Ambresh Kencha, an activist from Bidar Revolution.

Referring to a media report, the petitioner stated that 55 teaching staff, who were part of poll duty, died from Covid after the elections, while some are serious. CONTINUED ON: P7

Guj cyclone toll 45; bodies of 26 on ill-fated barge found, 47 missing

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Mumbai/New Delhi

MONSTER cyclone Tauktae that made landfall in Gujarat on Monday night left a trail of destruction, killing 45 people across 12 districts, apart from drowning at least 26 occupants of ONGC's Barge-P305 35 nautical miles off the Mumbai coast.

While the 26 bodies were brought ashore by a Navy team on Wednesday, 47 others who were on the barge on the ill-fated night are still unaccounted for.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday undertook an aerial survey of affected areas in Gujarat and the adjoining Union Territory of Diu to assess the devastation. Indian Navy and the Coast Guard continued their search and rescue operations for the third day. Modi later approved a grant of ₹1,000 crore for immediate relief activities in Gujarat besides ₹2 lakh compensation to the next of kin of all the victims of the cyclone.

A Navy ship provides assistance to a partially flooded tug off Daman | PTI

Navy spokesperson Commander Vivek Madhwal said, 186 crew members of Accommodation Barge P-305 and two from Tug 'Varapradha' have been rescued by Navy ships and aircraft so far. Efforts to locate the 47 missing personnel is in progress.

INS Talwar assisted Support Station 3 and drill ship Sagar Bhushan, which are now being safely towed back to Mumbai by ONGC support vessels. Food and water to the 300-odd crew members of these vessels was also provided by naval helicopters from Mumbai earlier in the day.

In Gujarat, 15 deaths were reported from Amreli district in Saurashtra region. Eight persons each were killed in Bhavnagar and Gir Somnath districts, an official of the State Emergency Operation Centre said. Ahemdabad had five deaths, while there were two fatalities in Kheda, and one each in Anand, Vadodara, Surat, Valsad, Rajkot, Navsari and Panchmahal districts.

As many as 30,000 structures, including 28,430 *kachcha* houses, 74,493 electricity poles and 674 roads were damaged, 68,753 trees uprooted and power supply snapped in over 9,000 Gujarat villages.

DD International coming to change global narrative

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

PERHAPS pummelled by the loads of bad press India's Covid response has been drawing, national broadcaster Doordarshan had decided to launch an international channel to try to change the narrative.

India's Covid situation continues to dominate headlines across a wide swathe of international publications and websites like *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *BBC*, *The Australian*, *The Economist*, and news agency *Reuters*.

Doordarshan last week floated an expression of interest for DD International, inviting comments from private players to draft a detailed project report for the new channel. Bids were invited from reputed global consultants with experience in advising international broadcasters/media houses on projects.

Prasar Bharati CEO S S Vempati said such a project was on the cards for some time now. "It has been a long overdue strategic objective to establish international presence for Doordarshan. The Prasar Bharati Board in its last meeting (March) gave the nod to develop a project roadmap for the same by engaging a strategy consultant. This EOI is a step towards that," said Vempati. The EOI said bureaus would be set up globally and there would be round-the-clock world service streams.

KEEP THE FAITH

Places of worship open gates to all, turn into Covid Care Centres

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @Bengaluru

PLACES of worship are no longer just a space for devotion and community gatherings – going beyond these confines, they are turning into places of healing. Cutting across faiths, community halls in Karnataka are being turned into Covid Care Centres to help the local populations.

As the number of Covid cases continues to surge, the State endowment department is offering to open all community halls located next to temples to treat patients. The Wakf Board, too, has turned Haj Bhavan into a CCC.

Endowment Minister Kota Srinivas Poojary said they have informed DCs to utilise community halls. To begin with, the Sabha Bhavan next to Kukke Subramanya Temple in Dakshina Kannada will be developed into a CCC, where an oxygen unit will be included. "As all our temples are closed for the public, our community halls can be utilised for treatment," he said. The endowment department runs over 34,000 temples. A department official said this service is for the people, irrespective of caste and religion. "All Class A temples have big community halls and can be used for Covid treatment," he added.

The Wakf Board and minorities department, too, have asked DCs to utilise their space as CCCs. In Bengaluru, Byatarayanapura MLA Krishna Byregowda helped set up a CCC at Haj Bhavan with a 140-bed high oxygen flow facility.

RURAL TASK FORCE IN EACH BOOTH: SUDHAKAR

To contain the surge in Covid cases, a rural task force will be set up in each booth, which will include locals, leaders and organisations. As home isolation is not allowed to patients, as announced earlier, the task force will shift them to CCCs, Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar said. P6

EXPRESS READ

Withdraw new privacy policy, WhatsApp told

New Delhi: The government has ordered WhatsApp to withdraw its controversial new privacy policy, saying the changes undermine the sacrosanct values of privacy, data security and harms rights and interests of Indian citizens.

2 quakes rattle Nepal, Jammu and Kashmir

Kathmandu/Jammu: A 5.8-magnitute earthquake struck Nepal's western Lamjung district on Wednesday, injuring six and damaging houses. Meanwhile, an earthquake of magnitude 3.2 hit Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district, with no damage reported.

I-T dept issues ₹24.8k cr refunds so far this FY

New Delhi: The Income Tax Department on Wednesday said it has issued over ₹24,792 crore refunds to more than 15 lakh taxpayers so far this fiscal. Of this, personal income tax refunds worth ₹7,458 crore has been issued in over 14.98 lakh cases.

ALMANAC TODAY

• **Thursday :** 20/05/2021 • **Year:** Plava • **Ayana:** Uttharayana • **Ritu:** Vasantha • **Masa:** Vaishala • **Paksha:** Shukla • **Tithi:** Ashtami 6.50 am • **Nakshatra:** Makhaa 11.02 am • Moon in Kanya Rashi • **Rahukaala:** 01:30 pm to 03:00 pm • **Gulikakala:** 09:00 am to 10:30 am • **Yamaganda:** 03:00 am to 04:30 am

WEATHER

MIN 22°C | MAX 29°C

FORECAST Rain showers. Overcast

Sunrise 5.53 am | Sunset 6.39 pm | Moonrise 12.56 am | Moonset 12.52 pm

Panel to ensure kids don't miss out on learning

Will oversee best education modes for this year

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE State Government will set up an expert committee to frame guidelines for primary and secondary education for the academic year 2021-22 to ensure that children don't miss out on their learning because of Covid.

Primary and Secondary Education Minister S Suresh Kumar said the committee will oversee the assessment models, online education, offline education, teacher training methodology, pragmatic utilisation of budgetary resources and other related issues.

After meeting department officials at Vidhana Soudha on Wednesday, he said the committee will formulate measures to ensure that especially rural and government schoolchildren are not deprived of learning. The committee will submit a blueprint of its plans to the minister in one month.

The committee will submit a report keeping the third wave in mind. It will give importance to alternative methods of learning to prevent students' academic progress from being affected. The minister said that a meeting will be convened with the state women and child welfare minister and health minister.

The committee will comprise eminent educationists, representatives from the Indian Institute of Science, NIMHANS, child specialists, TAC members, eminent health experts apart from officers and representatives from parents, private schools and teachers' associations.

The minister said that the implementation of NEP will be top priority in the coming academic year.

Textbooks to reach students by July

Minister S Suresh Kumar told department officials that although physical classes may be delayed, textbooks should reach the students in time within the next two months.

Remedial measures for fee problem

For the coming academic year, to ensure that students are not inconvenienced, appropriate remedial measures should be devised as per the Karnataka High Court's order, the minister said. The Sankanuru Committee will submit a report on the renewal of recognition to private schools at the earliest date possible, he added.

FITNESS DURING LOCKDOWN

Citizens enjoy an evening walk on the otherwise busy Vani Vilas flyover in Basavanagudi on Wednesday | SHRIRAM BN

For pedestrian safety, traffic cops want skywalk or underpass at Hebbal Jn

S LALITHA @Bengaluru

TO ease the woes of pedestrians walking below the busy Hebbal Flyover, the traffic police have proposed an underpass or a skywalk at the junction. The move comes after many accidents were reported when pedestrians tried to cross the junction.

Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Ravikanthe Gowda and top officials of Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), which maintains the flyover, conducted a joint inspection of the location last week.

"It is a crucial spot as roads from all directions, including the airport, K R Puram and Tumakuru, converge. The traffic signal here gives pedestrians just 30-40 seconds to cross. The time we provide depends on the traffic at a particular time. Many people are hesitant to cross quickly due to heavy traffic. For the safety of pedestrians, either an underpass or a skywalk, whichever is technically feasible, should be put up here. BDA has been told to do it at the earliest," Gowda told *TNIE*.

A project for pedestrian safety at the spot has been in the pipeline for long. "Technical issues were cited in the past, but now we are told that they can be eliminated," he added.

Another top police officer said that over the last six months, 15 accidents have occurred and three have lost lives at the spot. "It is very dangerous here. Nearly 3,000 to 4,000 pedestrians cross this junction every day, and it is crucial to ensure their safety," he added.

A top Bangalore Development Authority official said they were working on a proposal. "If the police want something in public interest, we need to ensure that it is done. Technical possibilities of putting up a subway below the flyover is being studied. A decision will be taken soon," he added.

One furnace at Wilson Garden crematorium closed for repairs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

WITH the increase in number of deaths, one of the furnaces of the Wilson Garden Crematorium has been closed for eight days to take up maintenance and repair. The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike head office on Wednesday announced that the furnace will be closed from May 20- 27 for maintenance works.

The furnace in the crematorium had to be closed down because of overheating. A staffer at the crematorium told The New Indian Express that the inner layers are made of brick and have got over heated while some sections are damaged. "There is, however, a misunderstanding among people that the plates have melted and burnt out, which is not true. Due to Covid, not just the staffers, even the machines are over stretched and are working round the clock. So, there is a need to allow them to cool down, repair them and take up overall maintenance work. A similar thing had happened in Banashakari too," he said.

Earlier, one of the furnaces at the Banashankari electric crematorium was closed for maintenance works from May 11 and is going to be fully operational from May 20.

The furnaces need at least 4-5 hours of break in a day, but that is not happening, which has led to the present situation, he said, adding that gradually, the same can happen at all the 18 sites and the load on firewood cremation sites will increase.

Vax supply hit, admits BBMP chief

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

BBMP Chief Commissioner Gaurav Gupta on Wednesday said vaccination supply had been hit in some parts of the city. At an interactive session with members of Bengaluru Apartments Federation, Gupta said the vaccination drive is going on, but with supply being erratic, it will take time to meet demand. As and when supply resumes, the public will be informed, he added.

Priority will be given to those in the 45+ age group for the first dose, and not for those waiting for the second dose of Covaxin and Covishield, as the dose interval has been increased to 12 months.

Residents pointed to the issue of vaccination and testing being done at the same PHC, and expressed their apprehension of the spread of the virus.

Gupta clarified that the vaccination drive is kept out of PHCs and hospitals, and is carried out in schools, parks, colleges and playgrounds.

HC seeks BBMP reply on crematorium at Mavallipura landfill

Bengaluru: The Karnataka High Court sought response from the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike on an interlocutory application filed by an NGO, Environment Support Group, and others questioning the proposal to set up an open-air crematorium in the lands currently in use as landfills at Mavallipura, for those people who succumbed to Covid-19. The BBMP proposed the setting up of a crematorium in the said place on April 28, 2021, as there was overcrowding at the existing facailities owing to a massive surge in Covid-related deaths. The petitioners have opposed the proposed crematorium in a landfill site on the ground that inflammable methane will be generated due to the burning, and it will also be disrespectful to the dead to use a landfill site for cremation. In support of their claims, the petitioners said the proposed plan will affect the activity of the Air Force Station at Yelahanka. Meanwhile, the BBMP counsel submitted that there is no crematorium at Mavallipura at present. Mentioning BBMP's submission, a division bench of Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and M Nagaprasanna orally observed to let them (Indian Air Force) come before the court if they are affected.

FREE CARE

Covid treatment centre opens at airport, for public too

A view of the COV-AID@BLR Covid treatment centre at KIA

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

A 150-bed oxygenated Covid-19 treatment centre at Kempegowda International Airport, billed COV-AID@BLR, was launched virtually on Wednesday by Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, during his visit to the airport.

The facility, located near the Cargo Terminal of the airport, is open for the public as well as employees from the airport ecosystem, said an official release from airport operator, Bangalore International Airport Limited.

"The facility is designed to treat patients who are asymptomatic, with mild hypoxia, and be a transit oxygen delivery centre. It will provide treatment for patients requiring oxygen support until they are able to get admission in a hospital," it said.

"Treatment at COV-AID@BLR would be free of cost, while charges for medicines, tests and self-arranged ambulance would be borne by patients," the release said.

A panel of doctors, including Dr Naresh Shetty, Dr Nandakumar Jairam and Dr Alexander Thomas, would provide technical assistance.

Patients can get admission by contacting the nodal officers Sannappaiah (9448116661) and Dr Sanjay (9538279991) or the 24x7 helpdesk on 9148670158/ 9148706158. Admissions can also be done with recommendation from a Referral Hospital.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

20th May: It's still time to follow Lunar movements. Personally I regard this as a moment when we can all put the past behind us and get on with the future. Well, I know that's not always possible – or even desirable – but it often helps to focus our minds on what we can do to make life a little better over the coming period!

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
In personal relationships the physical dimension will be important, and in business it will be the cash account that matters. You should think very carefully about how social activities may impinge on professional work and public duties, and vice versa.

TAURUS (Apr. 21 - May 21)
The truth lies in the details and even small changes and developments could make you more practical and realistic about business affairs. If you still feel that life's an uphill struggle, wait until next week, when you are due for another shot of celestial energy.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
One particularly challenging aspect now stresses the relationship between your own personal money on the one hand, and joint finances on the other. If you act now you can avert a possible problem or disagreement. Don't sit around while your world falls to pieces!

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
It feels as if so much that's happened has been influenced by circumstances over which you have had little or no control. But then you will eventually find it easier to understand what is happening. You will also realise that a great deal has been to your advantage.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)
You may pay all the attention that is required to home and family matters, and don't let others, especially close relations, pull the wool over your eyes! Friends may have good advice to offer on a romantic predicament. Perhaps an older person may be able to help you most.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
It's time to think. In fact you must ponder long, hard and deep on all those serious questions that pre-occupy you. The simple reason is that the door is about to be opened on a significant romantic breakthrough. It's not so much a matter of falling in love as of broadening your horizons.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
As you know, it's now absolutely necessary to have a major goal, otherwise you'll drift aimlessly. The plain and simple fact today is that your life's task is to sort out your financial situation! That's partly because you don't want to be dependent on people who might not share your dreams.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
You have the advantage today, which is a fair indication that you can take a few emotional risks and put your foot down at home, but also that you should exercise your emotional healing powers, helping a friend or relative in need. A good turn today will be repaid in full - when the time is right.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)
You know well enough that you have to cut your coat according to your cloth, and your attitude to money is soon to become very much more shrewd and calculating, which must be a good thing. Consult older or wiser friends, by the way, and make full use of their experience.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
Social goals should be important, although, as far as love affairs are concerned, you should be aware that passion doesn't come easily. The best relationships are those based on shared interests. I mean, what you really need at the moment is companionship rather than raw passion.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
You may devote as much energy as is required to achieving your professional goals, and realise that enthusiasm is as important as your grasp of the facts or previous experience. Success lies in having the right attitude! The best policy is to put your ideas across as convincingly as you can.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20)
Just exactly where you want to live and who you want to live with has been giving you a few sleepless nights. Rationally you know it's all extremely straightforward, but unconsciously it's highly complex! There is plenty to get on with at home, by the way, and not of all it can be left to others.

THE PHANTOM

DID YOU HAPPEN TO MEET THE TRUSTED MAN WHEN YOU CAME TO MEXICO?
BRIEFLY... AT LUCHA LIBRE. BEFORE WE KNEW ERNESTO WAS SECRETLY FIGHTING FOR YOUR CITY AS EL GUERRERO LATINO.
CHIEF SALINAS SENT ME. THIS WAY, SIR...
10/6/2011, ED.

HI AND LOIS

BEETLE BAILEY

SHOULD WE CALL THESE WEDGES, SUBS OR HEROES?
I'VE NEVER BEEN SURE ABOUT THAT
BUT IT IS KINDA HEROIC HOW SARGE CAN EAT ONE IN ONE BITE
GREG + MORT WALKER

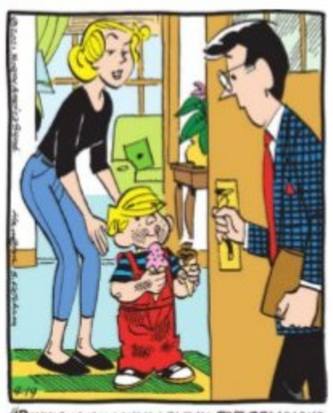
BLONDIE

REDUCE STRESS WITH THE DESKTOP PUNCHING BAG!!
I ACTUALLY BOUGHT ONE OF THOSE GADGETS!
DOES IT REALLY WORK?
OH YEAH! LIKE A CHARM!
I EVEN HAD MINE CUSTOMIZED

LOCKHORNS

"LEROY HAS MORPHED QUITE WELL FROM BASKETBALL TO BASEBALL SEASON."

DENNIS THE MENACE



"DENNIS IS NOW AVAILABLE IN *FIVE DELICIOUS FLAVORS*...HE'S ALL YOURS, DADDY."

SUDOKU

Medium: Test your number crunching skill with our unique puzzle

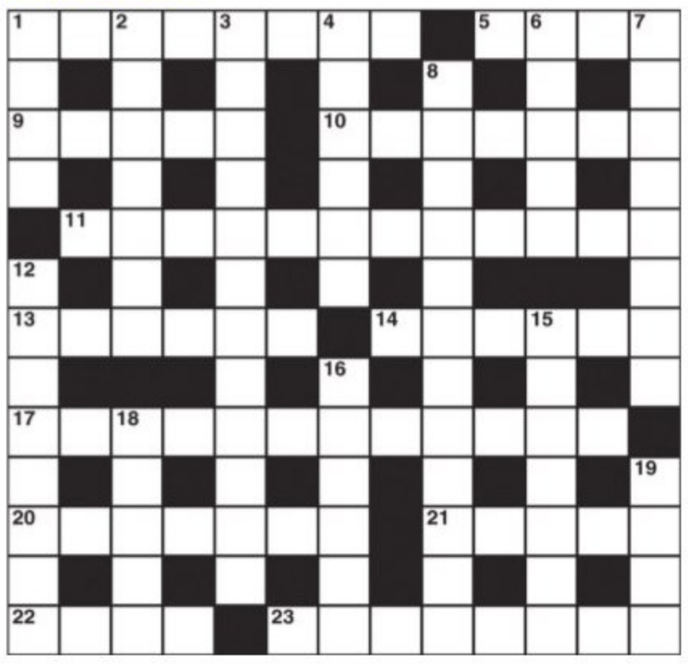
■ Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

6			7	2			5	
5	1		4		9	2		
4		9			7		1	
8	2		5		6		7	4
	3		9			5		2
		4	3		1		2	5
	7			4	2			8

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

1	8	5	9	4	2	6	7	3
3	9	7	6	8	5	4	1	2
2	6	4	1	7	3	9	5	8
9	5	2	3	1	7	8	4	6
4	1	8	2	5	6	3	9	7
7	3	6	4	9	8	1	2	5
6	4	3	7	2	1	5	8	9
5	2	9	8	6	4	7	3	1
8	7	1	5	3	9	2	6	4

CROSS WORD



ACROSS

1 Bury girl in recess (8)
5 Making soup involves work (4)
9 Drop a note (5)
10 Having pinched something we'd take off (7)
11 Fred is a crank maybe, but a great sailor (7,5)
13 Wave - or wave-maker (6)
14 One of the team, but not as a winger? (6)
17 What a silversmith is doing in a horse race? (7,5)
20 A reminder men hold me to (7)
21 Bottled spirit (5)
22 Feature of one's facial make-up (4)
23 The relay can be tough (8)

DOWN

1 I need a doctor for the foot (4)
2 A growing attachment (7)
3 Empire builders perhaps or men in Lagos (5,7)
4 Obtain gain? (6)
6 It's properly done in India (5)
7 Turned blue (8)
8 Headlamp? (7,5)
12 Urge fellows to become journalists (8)
15 Strained to define decimal point (7)
16 Region possibly showing neglect (6)
18 Fifty-one doctors appear to be members (5)
19 Depend on entirely? No, only half (4)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Indenture, 8 Learn, 9 William, 10 Fiscal, 11 Versus, 12 Emphasis, 15 Impostor, 18 Cringe, 20 Lariat, 21 Valerie, 22 Tease, 23 Sovereign.

Down: 2 Naive, 3 Enlist, 4 Transept, 5 Elfish, 6 Fascist, 7 Enclosure, 11 Vacillate, 13 Purchase, 14 Spartan, 16 Spades, 17 Biteme, 19 Going.

JUMBLE By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

RSFIK

CCAHO

TCNOOT

CWTIEK

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The next train for Greenwich is leaving on track 22 in 10 minutes.
Better call it a day.
SHE HAD A LOT TO DO WHILE WAITING FOR HER TRAIN, SO SHE TURNED A TABLE INTO A ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon

Ans. here:

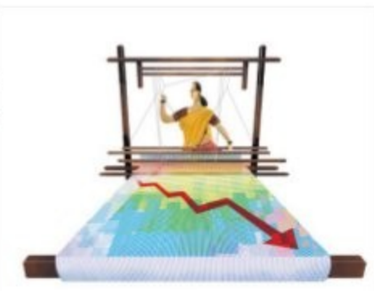
ANSWERS TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S: **Jumbles:** GRAVE SHOVE COUSIN VALLEY
ANSWER: While visiting France's Brie region, they had their photo taken and got to – SAY CHEESE

The State Government will set up an expert committee to frame guidelines for primary and secondary education for the academic year 2021-22 to ensure that children don't miss out on their learning because of Covid

Siddu says math doesn't add up; Opposition leaders compare aid to TN, Kerala payouts

CONGRESS, JDS DENOUNCE ₹1,250-CR RELIEF PACKAGE AS 'INADEQUATE', 'EYEWASH'



EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE Opposition Congress and JDS have termed the Rs 1,250-crore relief package announced by the State Government on Wednesday as "unscientific and inadequate".

Former Chief Minister and Congress leader Siddaramaiah said it is just eyewash, and the state should have taken a cue from neighbouring states that have announced much better packages to help people. "The government must provide 10kg rice and Rs 10,000 each as relief to the working class. The Chief Minister said it is a Rs 1,250-crore package, but details released by the government show it is Rs 1,111.82 crore. In that, Rs 494 crore is compensation for construction workers. That money comes from workers' welfare fund and should not be included in the package," he said.

The government has extended recovery of Rs 134.30 crore loan by cooperative banks by three months, and this should not be treated as a relief package, he added. "Last year, the CM had announced a Rs 2,100-crore package, in which Rs 850 crore was from the construction workers' welfare fund, but the government had claimed that it provided the funds," the former CM said. "Many people did get relief. The government had announced that it will give Rs 5,000 each to 7.75 lakh autorickshaw and cab drivers in the state. But in reality, only 2.10 lakh people got it. Over 50 per cent of horticulture farmers did not get any relief. The Tamil Nadu government provided Rs 4,000 to 2.08 crore families, he said.

State Congress President DK Shivakumar said the government had announced a package last year, but people did not get relief. "Announcements of Rs 2,000 and Rs 3,000 is not adequate. If the government is serious about helping people, it must give Rs 10,000 as aid. Allow gram panchayats to identify people in need of assistance and give it to them," he said.

Former Chief Minister and JDS leader HD Kumaraswamy too termed the package as inadequate. "The Kerala government had announced a Rs 20,000-crore package. Karnataka is a bigger state, how can Rs 1,200 crore be adequate?" he questioned.

However, BJP state general secretary N Ravi Kumar said the relief package, announced despite financial constraints, will help a large number of people.

QUEUING UP FOR TEST

People stand in line to get Covid test done near Devaraja Market in Mysuru on Wednesday | UDAYSHANKARS

Central adviser moots IIT-K model, strategies to handle Covid

Bengaluru: Chief Economic Adviser to the Union government Krishnamurthy Subramanian mooted the IIT Kanpur Sutra model for Karnataka, which is reeling under the impact of the pandemic, at a virtual meeting with Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Wednesday. Subramanian said the model, which involves projections and studies about Covid-19 cases peaking in different districts, could benefit Karnataka. He has studied the state closely, especially the rural regions in the northern parts of the state. The economic adviser also discussed the preparations and strategies adopted by other countries in community medicine, besides the impact on economies. ENS

State farmers not happy with aid, demand more

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mysuru

THE farmers' association has expressed its displeasure over CM B S Yediyurappa's Rs 1250-crore package, and termed it as "eyewash that wouldn't much benefit the farming community or common man".

KRRS State President Badagalapura Nagendra said the government has not responded to the plight of people hit hardest by the pandemic. He said that floriculturists are given just Rs 10,000 per hectare, and wanted it to be increased to Rs 25,000, and a minimum of Rs 10,000 per acre for those raising horticulture crops.

He said the government should have exempted farmers from loan repayment for one year, and announce fresh interest-free loans to boost farming and stabilise their livelihood.

Nagendra also criticised the government over its silence on compensation to those who died due to lack of oxygen.

Federation of Farmers' Association president Kurbur Shanthakumar said the state government should prevail on the Centre to exempt farmers from repaying loans borrowed from commercial banks for the next three years, and one year for loans borrowed from cooperative institutions.

He said that besides raising compensation, the government should also pay Rs 10,000 to labourers in the unorganised sector and extend Indira Canteen facilities to all.

KASSIA miffed as govt 'neglects' small industries

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

KARNATAKA Small Scale Industries Association (KASSIA) said the state government neglected the MSME sector by not providing any relief to it in the package announced on Wednesday. They demanded that the state government announce a relief package for the MSME sector to restore industrial production.

KASSIA president KB Arasappa said they were seriously concerned about the state of micro and small enterprises in the state and the government must step in by announcing relief packages.

The packages announced by the CM for the agriculture sector is a welcome move, he said. The MSME sector, which is an extremely important segment of manufacturing which contributes sizeably to state GDP and generates employment for a large number of people, has been neglected by the government, he added.

The association said the requests to waive fixed charges in the power bill payments for three months, reduction of the tax imposed on petrol and diesel up to March 2022, working capital at four per cent to MSMEs and not to enhance water tariff and property tax up to March 2022 has not been considered by the government. KASSIA said that 20 per cent of the units had closed due to the previous lockdown and once again, the 14-day lockdown may force 20 to 30 per cent of units to close again.

We had demanded a package for these workers who had worked even during the sudden lockdown last year. The government shot down our request last year too. This sector of workers have been neglected by the government

Vinay Sharathy, United Food Delivery Partners' Union, president

Food delivery partners' body too wants relief

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

MEMBERS of the United Food Delivery Partners' Union on Wednesday appealed to the state government to announce a relief package for the food delivery partners in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Union President Vinay Sarathy told *TNIE* that even though the government declared food delivery services among essential services, many people decided to work because of their improper financial condition. "We had demanded for a package for these workers who had worked even during the sudden lockdown last year. The government shot down our request last year too. This sector of workers have been neglected by the government.'

He added that during the current lockdown, many workers have returned to their hometowns and many others have been working under high risk conditions. A large number of them are feeding their families only from what they earn by delivering these orders as it is their full time job. This leaves their families also under high risk.

The union has 1,000 registered partners under its umbrella in Bengaluru. Many partners are yet to join the union. They work with food delivery apps such as Swiggy and Zomato among others.

"Earlier, before lockdown-1, I used to earn at least Rs 2,500-Rs 3,000 a day. During lockdown-1 and post the lockdown, my earnings dropped to Rs 800-Rs 900 a day. Now, I earn not more than Rs 300 a day. Also if there is more than one order from the same area, while the customer is charged full service/ delivery charge, we partners get only a part of that amount. We have to bear fuel costs. The company takes the tips customers pay through the food delivery apps and we do not get anything," said a delivery partner.

Toolkit politics: Cong MPs slam BJP, say govt has failed on all fronts

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Congress on Wednesday came down heavily on the BJP for its "toolkit" claims, saying they were just attempts to divert the media's attention from the ground situation, especially as Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been getting bad press, both in India and abroad, for his failure to handle the pandemic.

Bengaluru Rural MP **DK Suresh** slammed the government, saying that when every nation had taken precautionary measures for the second wave, the Indian government had failed completely. "What has PM Modi's lighting of lamps and plate banging done? Lamps in many houses have been snuffed out. This government is responsible for their deaths," he alleged.

Foreign media, too, has been critical of the Indian government, he said. "Yediyurappa only offers a package of Rs 50,000 to cremate bodies. The sum of Rs 2,000-3,000 offered by the government is so meagre it does not even cover transport cost," he said. Suresh also spoke of his constituents' struggle to get beds and oxygen.

AICC spokesman Brijesh Kalappa said the BJP was using the toolkit issue to divert the attention of the media from the barrage of criticism the government was receiving. He said reputed medical journals like the Lancet had criticized the Modi government for Covid management. The BJP is blaming the Congress for a 'toolkit', he said, alleging that BJP leaders JP Nadda, Sambit Patra, BL Santhosh, Tejasvi Surya and others are responsible for it, and can be punished for up to seven years for forgery for creating it.

Rajya Sabha MP Syed Nasir Hussain said the government was fudging data on deaths, as were Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and other states. "Who will take responsibility for the scores of bodies floating down the Ganga?" Hussain asked. He also wanted to know why the government was unable to import vaccines earlier, and make them available to the people.

MPs L Hanumanthaiah and GC Chandrashekar said the government had bungled badly on two issues — managing Covid and the vaccine drive.

TIMELY HELP

Unorganised sector workers to get ₹2k in aid

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

A Rs-2,000 financial assistance has been announced for unorganised sector workers, like barbers, washermen, porters, rag-pickers, potters, goldsmiths, mechanics, blacksmiths, domestic workers, cobblers etc. Another Rs 2,000 aid will be extended to street vendors. An estimated 3.04 lakh people from the unorganised sector and 2.2 lakh street vendors registered with Atma Nirbhar funds, are set to benefit, the CM said.

About 16,095 artists and artist groups registered with the Kannada and Culture Department will receive Rs 3,000. The schedule for repayment of small, medium and long-term loans beginning from May 1, 2020 availed by farmers and self-help groups from cooperative societies, land banks etc has been extended by three months to June 31, 2021. Apart from beneficiaries already registered under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana and Antyodaya for May and June, the State will add 30 lakh more people, and provide each of them with 5 kg rice.

Those who have applied for BPL ration cards but haven't received it yet will be given free 10 kg rice for May and June, while those awaiting for APL cards will be given subsidised 10 kg rice at Rs 15 per kg. The State Government has decided to deposit Rs 50,000 as advance from the State Disaster Relief Fund to each GP to manage the pandemic. "So far, Rs 956 crore has been spent on treatment of Covid patients. Rs 1,000 crore will be spent on procuring vaccines to administer free shots to those aged between 18 and 44. 2,150 doctors will be appointed," he said.

Govt clueless on Covid: Satish Jarkiholi

ENS @ Belagavi

ATTRIBUTING the rising Covid deaths in the state to the government's inability to handle the raging Covid-19 situation, KPCC Working President Satish Jarkiholi said the government does not have a clue as to how many people are dying of Covid every day, nor does it have any information about the actual deaths.

The people of the state are worst-hit only due to the government's negligence and failure to ramp up life-saving medical facilities, he said, adding that the government did not take the warning issued by experts and opposition leaders on the second wave seriously.

People are dying because of government's mistakes. Before it worsens, the government should wake up

Satish Jarkiholi

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Tender No.	Description
IREL/MK/ET 10/2021-22	Steel Structurals / Roof Sheet Repair works at Master roof of MSP and Raw Sand Godowns
IREL/MK/ET 12/2021-22	Mechanised Loading & Transportation of Beachwashings collection, Trailing, etc.
IREL/MK/ET 13/2021-22	Transportation of Mineral Cargo from Manavalakurichi Plant to Tuticorin Port and Shipment through Tuticorin Port
GEM/2021/B/1223703	Supply of High Speed Diesel as per IS 1460: 2017

For further details visit www.mstcecommerce.com/eprochome/irel.
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e-Procurement Notice IFB Nos.13/2021-22 to 26/22021-22 Dt.19.05.2021
Tender for total 14 Nos. of works i.e. 11 No. of works costing below Rs.50.00 Lakh and 02 No. of works costing above Rs.50.00 Lakh in respect of HW & HLC Division, TB Dam and LLC Division, Ballari are invited through 'e-Procurement'.

Bid Document downloading Start Date & Time	: 20.05.2021 at 11.00 AM
Bid Document downloading End Date & Time (For IFB Nos.13/2021-22 to 18/2021-22)	: 07.06.2021 at 3.00 PM
Last Date & Time for submission of Bids (For IFB Nos.13/2021-22 to 18/2021-22)	: 07.06.2021 at 5.30 PM
Date of opening of Price Bids (For IFB Nos.13/2021-22 to 18/2021-22)	: 08.06.2021 at .11.00 AM
Bid Document downloading End Date & Time (For IFB Nos.19/2021-22 to 18/2021-22)	: 28.05.2021 at 3.00 PM
Last Date & Time for Submission of Bids (For IFB Nos.19/2021-22 to 18/2021-22)	: 28.05.2021 at 5.30 PM
Date of opening of Price Bids (For works costing below Rs.50.00 lakh)	: 28.05.2021 at 6.00 PM
Date of opening of PQ Stage (For works costing below Rs.50.00 lakh)	: 28.05.2021 at 6.00 PM
Date of opening of Commercial Stage (For works costing below Rs.50.00 lakh)	: 29.05.2021 at 10.30 AM
Date of opening of TQ Stage (For works costing below Rs.50.00 lakh)	: 31.05.2021 at 10.30 AM

* Note: Reverse Tendering Applicable for Works costing Rs.1.00 Crore and above
Further details can be seen @https://tender.apeprocurement.gov.in
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Sd/- K V Ramana
Superintending Engineer, I.B, TB Board, TB Dam

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MAHARASHTRA RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
(महाराष्ट्र शासन आणि रेल्वे मंत्रालय यांचा संयुक्त उपक्रम)
(A Joint Venture of Govt. of Maharashtra and Ministry of Railways)
२ रा मजला, हेक्स्ट हाऊस, नरीमन पॉईंट, मुंबई - ४०० ०२१
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Expression of Interest

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Managing Director

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THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

COVID-19

06 BENGALURU THURSDAY 20.05.2021

TRACKING COVID-19

SPEED AND RISE OF COVID-19 CASES IN KARNATAKA

34,281 CASES REPORTED TODAY

30,309 CASES REPORTED YESTERDAY

TALLY STANDS AT

TODAY	23,06,655
YESTERDAY	22,72,374

DEATHS

TODAY	YESTERDAY
468	525

DISCHARGES

TODAY	YESTERDAY
49,953	58,395

ACTIVE CASES

TODAY	YESTERDAY
5,58,890	5,75,028

POSITIVITY RATE
TODAY 8.17%
YESTERDAY 8.09%

MORTALITY RATE
TODAY 1.01%
YESTERDAY 1.00%

RECOVERY RATE
TODAY 74.75%
YESTERDAY 73.68%

The first Covid-19 case in Karnataka was reported on March 8, 2020. Since then until May 19, 2021, a total of 23,06,655 cases have been reported in 1 year and 69 days...

1,14,28,711 Number of people vaccinated across the state

VACCINATION DRIVE STATUS

Health care workers 1st dose	7,02,693
Health care workers 2nd dose	4,62,519
Frontline workers 1st dose	5,06,085
Frontline workers 2nd dose	1,97,183
Age 18-45 1st dose	1,28,232
Age 45st dose	75,48,293
Age 45 2nd dose	18,83,706

DISTRICT-WISE COVID CASES

LAST 24 HOURS

11,772 BENGALURU URBAN

812 BENGALURU RURAL

Bagalakot: 362	Chamarajanagar: 576	Dakshina Kannada: 829	Hassan: 1,428	Kolar: 895	Raichuru: 469	Udupi: 856
Ballari: 1,297	Chikkaballapur: 555	Davanagere: 700	Haveri: 170	Koppal: 336	Ramanagara: 304	Uttara Kannada: 833
Belagavi: 2,234	Chikkamagaluru: 1,047	Dharwad: 871	Kalaburagi: 440	Mandya: 730	Shivamogga: 819	Vijayapura: 227
Bidar: 149	Chitradurga: 422	Gadag: 486	Kodagu: 197	Mysuru: 1,730	Tumakuru: 2,427	Yadgir: 308v

Fewer tests in state raise worries

Asymptomatic patients not being tested at PHCs; Experts warn 3rd wave could come sooner

CHETANA BELAGERE AND RANJANI MADHAVAN @ Bengaluru

AFTER a sharp spiral, the number of fresh Covid-19 cases in Karnataka seems to be coming down. But are the figures hiding something? Officials in the health department seem to be under pressure from the State Government to show a reduction in number of cases.

While Karnataka tops the list of eight states contributing to the high number of active cases, sources in the Health Department have confirmed that officials in the districts have been strictly told to keep the numbers to a minimum and also not to test asymptomatic patients.

According to the sources, medical officers in the districts have been told not to collect samples from asymptomatic patients and, if collected, the district Deputy Commissioners have been directed to take disciplinary action against the officer in charge. "We have been told not to collect samples even if there are requests from asymptomatic primary or secondary contacts," said an officer on condition of anonymity.

The officials have also apparently been told to compulsorily display a board stating that "Covid test is being done only for symptomatic patients". Labs in some of the districts have also been told not to collect samples from asymptomatic patients, the source said. The targets set by the department for the districts, which used to be high during the previous wave and even till April, has now been scaled down to 200 at district hospitals, 75 at taluk hospitals, 25 at CHCs and only 10 at PHCs. Frontline doctors at PHC told *TNIE* that though there is no official communication on reducing tests, but they have been told to test only symptomatic patients, primary and secondary contacts. "There is less pressure now to meet targets for testing," said a doctor from a PHC at Chikkaballapur. "As we have to do more quality testing, the number has come down from 250-300 to 150-200 per day," said another doctor at a PHC in Bengaluru.

However, experts continue to warn that Karnataka may be inviting a third wave sooner with reduction in the number of tests. Data from Health Department shows that the state has reduced tests from 1.9 lakh a month ago to only about 93,000 for two consecutive days on Monday and Tuesday. In April, about 1.72 lakh tests were being conducted, the highest being 1.9 lakh in a day.

Dr Giridhara R Babu, member of Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) warned there have been several evidences that the number of asymptomatic patients testing positive have been high in the earlier wave and this wave too. One needs to be careful about not testing this population, he said. Dr C N Manjunath, another TAC member and nodal officer for testing, suggested door-to-door survey and extensive use of Rapid Antigen Test could be done to detect infections early.

However, Health Commissioner Dr Thrilok Chandra said, "We have not told to stop testing asymptomatic patients. We have made it mandatory to test even the primary contacts. Also, if you look at our testing numbers, nearly 50-60% of them are asymptomatic. This is not true."

TESTS IN THE LAST 9 DAYS

Date	RAT	RT-PCR	Total
May 11	11,579	1,04,659	1,16,238
May 12	10,560	1,24,232	1,34,792
May 13	10,311	1,17,357	1,27,668
May 14	10,315	1,16,790	1,27,105
May 15	8,326	1,10,019	1,18,345
May 16	9,713	1,03,506	1,13,219
May 17	6,424	90,812	97,236
May 18	12,535	80,712	93,247
May 19	12,610	1,16,928	1,29,538

NUMBERS MATTER

Covid-19 death rates similar globally, lowest in India: Study

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

A KSRTC bus converted into an ICU, in Bengaluru on Wednesday | VINOD KUMAR T

DESPITE the mayhem caused by the second wave of the pandemic and India's unpreparedness to respond to the unprecedented surge, the death rate from Covid-19 is "very similar across countries, with India still among the lowest," according to Dr Shiv Narayan Nishad from CSIR-National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies, New Delhi, and Prof Prashant Goswami, Institute of Frontier Science and Applications (IFSA), Bengaluru. Their findings have been published in a scientific paper they have co-authored and is available as a preprint in 'The Lancet', the prestigious international science journal.

The paper - 'A Comparative and Evidence-Based Assessment of COVID-19 Response in India' is an "evidence-based analysis using public domain data from global platforms like WHO, as well as a couple of other international sources on high degrees of similarities in regional structures. Also, the death rates were found to be very similar (about 2 per cent of the confirmed cases), in spite of a wide range of health care practices across the world," Goswami told *The New Indian Express*. The two scientists and co-authors have re-examined this issue in view of the second Covid-19 wave.

Recently, there have been a lot of discussions in India as well as in international media regarding the severity of the second wave of Covid in India, and India's presumed failure to respond to it. "While better foresight, stricter preventive measures and higher efficiency in vaccination are undoubtedly required, it is worthwhile to compare India's performance in a global context to learn valuable lessons as well as to avoid loss of morale due to thoughtless analysis," said Goswami.

To begin with, Covid-19 is considered to spread through agent-based (through people-to-people contact) transmissions. Thus, a logical analysis should consider the cases per capita (like per million) of population. Actual numbers hide the fact that a country may be dealing with 10 times more population (and hence contacts) than a country, but is still lower on Covid cases or deaths, the study says.

The epochal behavior of Covid, in terms of daily new cases, with two, somewhat separate, major peaks (with a much higher second peak) is very characteristic for the US and the UK. India has followed a similar pattern, but with a lag of about 90 days, and with much smaller per million cases till now. It was also pointed out that the initial growth of the pandemic, (normalised 15-day epochal linear trend), was very similar across the world. However, with the availability of data on the second wave, and post March, 2020, a number of interesting features have emerged, which can aid preventive preparedness and planning

Perhaps the most significant feature is that in spite of wide variations in types of response and the efficiency of health care set-up across different countries, the death rate from Covid-19 is very similar across countries, with India still among the lowest! While the issue of underreporting of cases/deaths may remain, an analysis of cases and deaths as percentage of tests carried out also show a similar scenario, although there is an increase in death rate as percentage of tests in India in the past weeks (becoming comparable to that of the US), the study points out.

It would be logical to expect that countries with supposedly better healthcare and distribution facilities would have smaller per million cases as well as deaths. However, international data shows that the performance in India, both in terms of number of cases (prevention) and deaths (cure) remain among the best in the world. While this cannot be any reason for complacence, it does put the issue in a more logical perspective. After all, Covid-19 being a novel pandemic, its patterns of growth and spread are still emerging. Thus, the emergence or the severity of the second Covid-19 wave was not predicted or anticipated by the agencies concerned, nationally or internationally, the analysis says.

Going by the global patterns, the second wave should subside by May-end if the preventive measures are carefully followed. However, the possibility of a third wave cannot be ruled out; an important and urgent preparatory measure would be to complete the vaccination of the population in the next three months, it stressed.

(More details: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3618307..and also at WHO website https://pesquisa.bvsalud.org/global-literature-on-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/resource/en/ppcovidwho-1748)

'Centre nod soon to use oxygen produced in State'

ENS @ Bengaluru

INDUSTRIES Minister **Jagadish Shettar**, who is also in charge of oxygen supply in the state, on Wednesday said that as many as 104 oxygen generating units will start functioning in the coming days, which will be set up in association with the Centre and public sector undertakings. This will ensure that oxygen supply is not affected, he said.

Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, Shettar said that after writing letters to Union ministers Piyush Goyal, Pralhad Joshi and D V Sadananda Gowda, the Centre has agreed in principle to allow utilisation of oxygen produced in the state for its needs.

"We are expecting the official order in a day or two," he said. The Centre is helping with supply of 180 metric tons of oxygen from Bahrain and Kuwait. Besides, 120 MT from Jamshedpur was sent on May 11 and 180 MT from Kalinganagar on May 15.

The average consumption over the last one week has been 880 metric tons.

The minister said steps are being taken to convert oxygen and nitrogen production plants into oxygen units in the state.

FIGHTING PANDEMIC

With low supply, target to jab all by year-end unrealistic, feel experts

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

HEALTH Minister **Dr K Sudhakar** on Wednesday said that the State Government is aiming to vaccinate 100 per cent of the eligible population with both doses of the Covid-19 vaccine by October or November-end this year.

Health workers, however, said that this target was unrealistic owing to low supply of vaccines and added that March 2022 would be a more realistic target to vaccinate over 6 crore people of the state.

Dr Prasanna H M, president of Private Hospital and Nursing Homes Association, said, "We have to inoculate lakhs of people each day to achieve such a target. This is not possible as vaccines have to reach us so that we can distribute it to people. Private hospitals are yet to get vaccines from the manufacturers directly and it will take two more weeks. The vaccine drive for the 18-45 age group, which was suspended, is yet to restart."

For example, the target for vaccinating health workers in Phase 2 was 16 lakh. However, until now, only 7,01,194 have got the first dose and 4,61,838 people have got the second dose. This means only 28% of the target has been achieved for corona warriors getting both doses. For frontline workers, the target set was 2 crore. However, until now only 4,99,022 people have got the first dose and 1,96,187 got the second dose. This accounts for only 0.98% getting both doses.

Meanwhile, the state has ordered two crore doses of Covishield directly from Serum Institute of which two lakh doses arrived on Tuesday. Until now, 1,22,20,510 doses of both Covishield and Covaxin have arrived, including 1,11, 26,340 doses sent by the Union Government. "We placed a global tender for vaccines from foreign countries and we will also receive the Sputnik V vaccine. Our aim is to reduce deaths, give treatment on time and vaccinate as many people as possible quickly," Sudhakar said.

Commenting on black fungus treattment, he said the Centre has given 1,050 vials of Amphotericin-B to the state.

Rural task force to move Covid patients to care centres

ENS @ Bengaluru

TO contain the surge of Covid-19 infections in the state, a rural task force, set up by the State Government and including locals, leaders and organisations, will shift all patients who have no place for home isolation to Covid Care Centres.

Announcing this, Health and Medical Education Minister Dr K Sudhakar said, "Booth-level task force teams will be constituted including locals, leaders and organisations for Covid-19 management. They will be in charge of shifting all those who cannot follow home isolation, to CCCs." To bring down the mortality rate by preventing late reporting to hospitals, the government recently decided to do away with home isolation for Covid-19 patients in villages and slum areas in cities.

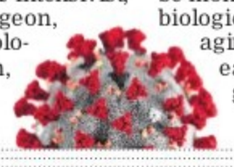
The village task force will be initiated by the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department and include Gram Panchayat members, local ASHA workers, local doctors from the Primary Health Centres and youths.

Multi-disciplinary approach to treat black fungus

ENS @ Bengaluru

WITH the rising cases of Covid-associated mucormycosis (CAM), the State Government has identified it as Notifiable Disease. It has also said that no patient can be sent back without treatment from a hospital which has the capacity to treat Mucormycosis.

Guidelines for treating such patients say that those who are admitted in hospitals and have comorbid conditions like diabetes mellitus, immunocompromised state, immunosuppressant drugs, or are on steroids for medical reasons, need a multi-disciplinary approach. The team of doctors looking after these patients should include an ENT surgeon, ophthalmologist, physician/intensivist, maxillofacial surgeon, anesthetist, neurologist/neurosurgeon, microbiologist.



For the antifungal therapy, Lyposomal Amphotericin-B injection is to be given while monitoring renal functions. If a patient is unable to take Amphotericin-B , then substitutes like T. Posoconazole/T. Isavoconazole (injectables or tablets) can be given. The patient should be monitored clinically, microbiologically and with radio-imaging for assessing and disease progression, the guidelines state.

Many hold on to oxy concentrators

AJITH M S @ Mysuru

WITH restrictions on procuring oxygen cylinders and concerns over bed availability, many are now hoarding oxygen concentrators, refusing to even return those taken on rent.

Oxygen cylinders have become near-impossible to procure since the authorities have instructed suppliers against distributing it to individuals and NGOs, leaving those in home isolation and also those recovering from Covid-19 under advice to be on oxygen support as well as non-Covid patients with issues like asthma, in dire straits.

Vendors who rent out concentrators and NGOs are complaining that many are not returning the concentrators but are instead choosing to pay the rent and continue to hold on to it. "We get many requirements on a daily basis, some in critical situations. But I am not able to supply to any of them, since those who have picked up the concentrators earlier are not returning them despite pleas," said Ravi Kumar Gowda of CBR Surgicals.

"The rental for concentrators is around Rs 3,000 per month, but people are okay holding on to them. They say it is better to continue paying the rent even if they are not using, instead of rushing for one, or worse, to a hospital, if there is a crisis, " he said. Another vendor said they are left with no option but to say no to patients.

Unauthorised oximeters seized in D'gere

Davanagere: The sale of substandard oximeters has become rampant here. Assistant controller of the Department of Weights and Measures, H S Raju, who visited various medical stores, found many unapproved devices and seized them. Speaking to *TNIE*, Raju said the oximeters did not have a price tag, BIS certification and date of manufacture. So far, 16 cases have been booked, he said. Raju said that people can contact 8050024760 in case of any complaints and lodge their grievances.

LIFELINE

Loco crew brims with pride as O_2 train chugs in

S LALITHA @ Bengaluru

IN a first such instance in the South Western Railway Zone, a woman was chosen to be part of the loco crew of the fourth Oxygen Express after it entered the Bengaluru Division bearing 120 tonnes of Liquid Medical Oxygen.

The train reached the Inland Container Depot at Whitefield on Tuesday from Jharkhand. Assistant Loco Pilot **Neelam Kumari,** a B.Tech graduate and mother of a five-year-old girl, has just completed one year in her job in the Bengaluru Railway Division. The Bihar native, along with Loco Pilot Dhirendra Kumar and V H Wali, Chief Loco Inspector, got into the engine room in Jolarpet Division.

The trio ensured the train, that started at 7.04 am, reached Whitefield at 8.31 am clocking a speed of 100 kmph through most of its journey, except at Bangarpet. It finally entered the ICD at 8.39 am. "I am extremely satisfied and feel proud that I could be of some help in this manner for people undergoing numerous hardships during the pandemic. It is such an honour," Kumari said.

"Bearing in mind the important consignment we were carrying, I really felt like an ambulance driver! The entire path was cleared for us and made signal-free, making it easy to bring the train to safety." Kumar, the father of a young son and daughter, also from Bihar, was in the driver's seat. "I came to know the night before the trip that I might get a chance to steer the Oxygen Express. It is the first time I am getting such an opportunity since I Joined the Bengaluru Division in 2013. I felt very good. I am fully aware what a precious consignment we were taking along." Wali, a native of Badami, spent his time standing inside the cabin throughout the trip from Jolarpet to Whitefield. "This is an important assignment. I just wanted to be sure everything happens perfectly," he said. During his 30-year stint in the Railways, he has been involved in transporting gas, oil and numerous other goods, but this was special, he added.

BLACK FUNGUS HAUNTS SOUTHERN STATES

While Kerala reported 15 cases, Tamil Nadu saw six and Andhra Pradesh three suspected cases

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Kochi, Chennai, Andhra Pradesh

MUCORMYCOSIS, the rare fungal infection being reported across the country as a fallout of Covid-19, is affecting the lives of people in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh as well.

As many as 15 cases of the disease, commonly known as black fungus, have so far been reported from various hospitals in the Kerala, including Thiruvanathapuram and Kottayam medical college hospitals.

A 50-year-old man residing in Kochi was confirmed with black fungus infection on Tuesday. He had tested positive for Covid-19 on April 22 and got discharged two weeks back. Subsequently, he sought treatment at a private hospital in Kochi as his face started swelling. He had to undergo an immediate surgery of sinus so as to prevent the infection from spreading to his eyes. According to the doctors who treated him, he was highly diabetic and also had kidney issues.

In another such incident, a 62-year-old man in Tirur, Malappuram, was diagnosed with the infection. As a result, his left eye had to be removed surgically. Black fungus infection has been reported from Kollam as well.

"So far, 15 cases of black fungus have been reported in the state. The rare fungal infection is found among those with uncontrolled diabetes and those who underwent organ transplantations. Black fungus is not a communicable disease and, therefore, there is no undue cause for worry. However, treatment should be provided at the earliest," Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said during his evening media briefing on Wednesday.

In Tamil Nadu, from the beginning of this month till Tuesday, the Government Ophthalmic Hospital, Egmore, treated at least six patients infected with black fungus, according to the doctors working there. Among the six patients, who were all men, five were diabetic and one was non-diabetic. "Though it is common among diabetic, we don't know how non-diabetic persons are also contracting the infection. It could be because of the steroids that the patients are given during Covid-19 treatment. Before the pandemic, we used to have three cases in a month, but now, so far in this month, till Tuesday, we have received six cases, all recovered from Covid-19," said a senior doctor at the Government Ophthalmic Hospital.

In Andhra Pradesh, three suspected cases of black fungus emerged in East Godavari district by Wednesday and of them, two are undergoing treatment at private hospitals while the other patient is being treated at the government hospital after denied treatment at some private hospitals. The Kakinada Government General Hospital authorities have allocated 10 beds in the hospital to treat Black fungus patients.

District collector D Muralidhar Reddy said the Kakinada GGH was also one of the 17 hospitals notified treating black fungus as it has multi disciplinary treatment facilities.

A ward for the treatment of black fungus patients set up at the Government ENT Hospital in Hyderabad | S SENBAGAPANDIYAN

AP orders 15,000 vials for treatment

Vijayawada: The Andhra government has placed an order for 15,000 vials of Amphotericin B used for treatment of Black Fungus infection. The order was placed with the three companies which are into manufacturing of the vials. Principal Secretary (health) Anil Kumar Singhal said the Centre has allotted just 1,650 vials of Amphotericin B vials to the state.

Treatment package formulated

Kakinada: The Andhra government issued a GO on Wednesday including black fungus in the list of diseases covered under the YSR Aarogyasri scheme, besides evolving a treatment package. According to the Medical and Health Department, the 14-day treatment package under the Post Covid with Mucormycosis Management costs Rs 41,968.

Declare our staffers as frontline workers: Karnataka forest dept

MEERA BHARDWAJ & BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

WITH many forest department staffers getting infected and dying due to Covid-19, the state forest department has been appealing to the state government to declare their staffers as frontline workers. This will help foresters get vaccinated on a priority basis. The delay in getting them declared as frontline workers is taking a toll on their morale as many have seen their colleagues die in the line of duty and they are unable to get vaccinated on time.

During the second wave, forest staffers have been instructed to protect the forest from encroachments and manage man-animal conflicts among others, said Sanjai Mohan, Karnataka PCCF and Head of Forest Force in a letter to the additional chief secretary (forests). "Frontline forest staffers are working round the clock and have been directed to be extra vigilant as hunting cases tend to increase in such times," the letter added. He added that they were awaiting confirmation from the the government and that 20 staffers had died so far due to the virus. Later, additional chief secretary (forests), Sandeep Dave and state Forest Minister Aravind Limbavalli also wrote to the state government and to Health Minister K Sudhakar on the issue.

"We were told that the state government was working on including education and forest department officials together and issuing a new order. But they haven't said when the new order will be issued," said a senior forest staffer.

The delay is taking a toll on the morale of staffers. A staffer from Bengaluru Rural said, "Many of my colleagues tested positive. We are planning to stop going to work due to the lackadaisical attitude of the state government, especially since we are also put on non-Covid duty."

Similar was the opinion of those working in the wildlife regions of the state including Bandipur and Nagarahole. "We are dealing with poachers and are in places where the district or urban boundaries are not defined. We are unable to get timely help and vaccination is required. So we are thinking of not going to work until we are vaccinated," said a wildlife staffer from Bandipur, on condition of anonymity.

The Indian Forest Service (IFS) Association, Central unit, has appealed to all state governments in the country to declare forest staffers as frontline workers in the ongoing efforts against Covid. "It has proactively shouldered additional responsibilities of helping forest communities during the pandemic even as continuing with their mandated responsibilities of protecting the country's biodiversity," the association said.

Dr Saket Badola, IFS, Secretary General, added, "With 25,000 field staffers and 3,000 officers, we hope the governments will take up this matter on a priority basis and immediately grant them the status of frontline workers."

Forest Department personnel of Karnataka man a check-post on the Karnataka and Tamil Nadu border to stop people from entering the state | EXPRESS

NEW KERALA CABINET

Veena replaces Shailaja, Balagopal gets fin min, 2 big portfolios for Riyas

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @T'Puram

SECOND-time MLA from Aranmula, **Veena George**, a journalist-turned politician and the youngest member of the cabinet, will take over the baton of the health department from K K Shailaja. Veena's administrative capabilities were on display when she coordinated relief activities in Pathanamthitta, one of the worst-hit districts during the 2018 flood. The CPM state secretariat found that Veena's youth, fast-learning quotient and social skills would make her a health minister who will be rated on a par with Shailaja.

K N Balagopal, a CPM state secretariat member and former Rajya Sabha MP, will be entrusted with the responsibility of handling the finance portfolio in the second Pinarayi Vijayan cabinet.

The CPM leadership's move to assign central committee member K Radhakrishnan the devaswom portfolio, in addition to SC/ST welfare, was hailed by party's cyber army as a historic move considering that upper caste Hindu ministers used to handle the portfolio ever since it was carved out as a full-fledged department in 1996.

Radhakrishnan's sidelining becomes more conspicuous with the assigning of two heavy weight portfolios -- PWD and tourism -- to first-time MLA Mohammed Riyas. The national DYFI president, who is also the son-in-law of Pinarayi, even outweighed seniors like Saji Cherian and V N Vasavan in the division of portfolios.

Pinarayi to retain Home, Vigilance

Despite heavy criticism against the home department last term, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan chose to retain the department along with vigilance. Amid changing times and the emergence of the convergence of technologies, the IT department could ideally be an extension of the industries department. Even with a talented leader like P Rajeeve set to helm that particular portfolio, the CPM has not decided to merge IT with industries. Sources hinted the CM would continue to handle IT.

TN minister to bear funeral expenses of Covid patients

Hands over 20 oxygen concentrators

The Minister also handed over 20 oxygen concentrators to Karur Government Medical College Hospital (GMCH), which were procured through VSB (V Senthil Balaji) foundations. The Minister, along with MLAs R Elango, K Sivagamasundari and R Manickam gave the oxygen concentrators to the GMCH Dean Dr Ashokan, in Karur on Wednesday.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Karur (TN)

THOUSANDS of families across the country are struggling financially to give a dignified burial to their loved ones lost to Covid. Reports keeping pouring in of unclaimed bodies piling up across States; some being left in watery graves of the holy river. Amid these distressing developments, Karur district has found a ray of hope in their elected representative — minister Senthil Balaji.

Balaji, the Electricity, Prohibition & Excise Minister, has announced that he will bear all the costs for the funeral of Covid patients who are being cremated in Karur. As far as the district is concerned, a total of 116 individuals have succumbed to the virus since the start of the pandemic. On Tuesday alone, as many as 9 died. The deceased are cremated at the Balammalpuram Electric Crematorium. Around ₹2,000 is charged for cremating a single dead body.

As the labourers working in the crematorium were infected with Covid-19, the Karur Municipal Health Inspector took charge of the cremation ground. For the past one week, Senthil Balaji has been bearing the cost for the cremation of the deceased ones in the crematorium, officials said. Addressing the media, Senthil Balaji said, "Until now, we haven't received any complaints on bribe or any hidden charges being collected by the workers at the Balammalpuram crematorium."

He added, "All the bodies brought here are being cremated from morning to night. I will bear all the cost for the funeral of those who die due to Covid-19."

CRIME PATROL

28-year-old loses ₹3.63L in online fraud

Bengaluru A 28-year-old man fell prey to online fraudsters who cheated him, saying he had won $60,000 in a lucky dip, and he ended up losing over Rs 3.63 lakh. Police said the complainant, Kane Robert (name changed), received a friend request from an unknown person with the profile name of Rev Peter John on Facebook, and he accepted it. John told the latter that he had won $60,000 in a lucky dip and Robert believed it. ENS

2 held for cheating people in need of Covid medicines

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE Cyber, Economic & Narcotic (CEN) Crimes police of Central Division have arrested two persons, including a Nigerian, for allegedly cheating people by promising medicines needed for treating Covid-19.

The accused are Mohammed Ismail Khadri (43), a resident of Adityanagar near Chikkabettahalli in Vidyaranyapura, and Alade Abdullah Yousuf (26), a resident of Attur Layout in Yelahanka, who hails from Moniya in Nigeria. Police said two cases were registered in the Central CEN Crimes police station.

Raj Agarwal, who came across a WhatsApp promotion, had contacted the phone number provided and the person claimed that he was running a pharmacy and cheated her after she transferred Rs 36,588.

In another case, Mujaheed Ahmed had lost Rs. 85,374 after he had ordered the medicine from HLL Lifecare Limited.

'EC held polls despite knowing situation'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

ALSO, family members of polling staff are infected, Ambresh Kencha, the activist from Bidar Revolution, pleaded. He contended that both ECI and SEC recently held by-elections and elections in the State, despite knowing that Covid was at its peak. They also allowed rallies and meetings at constituencies. Though he had filed a representation with both ECI and SEC to postpone the elections, they were irresponsible in not considering it, he alleged.

He appealed to the court to issue directions to the respondent authorities to give compensation of Rs 1 crore with a job on compassionate grounds to the family members of the deceased polling staff. If family members have died, they should be given Rs 30 lakh compensation and reimbursement of treatment bill, he prayed.

IN THE HC

Appealing to the court to issue directions to both ECI and SEC to provide details of deaths of polling staff, the petitioner requested it to seek an explanation and to direct filing of cases against those who are responsible for the deaths.

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521
No. EEE/AEE(O)/MWD/HSN/T-274/2021-22/334-37 Date: 07.05.2021

NOTIFICATION

Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited has formulated a scheme under section 67 and clause(c) of section 67(2) of the electricity supply of 2003 and the same is here by published in pursuance of the said act. This notification is issued for the information of license holders and any other concerned persons.

Particulars of the scheme are as here under

Name of the Project: Establishing 1x8 MVA, 66/11kV sub-station at **Belavadi** and Construction of 66kV LILO line from existing 66kV Kadavinakote-Bandishettyhally-Ramanathapura SC Line to the proposed sub-station **Belavadi** for distance of 0.37 Km in Arakalagudu Taluk, Hassan District.

Silent features: To Provide reliable and quality voltage supply and to meet the future load growth in and around **Belavadi (Ajjur)** areas.

Areas passing through Villages/Survey Nos.: **AJJURU: 74, 75.**

Estimated Cost: **Rs. 610.78 Lakhs.**

KPTCL shall have and exercise all powers which the telegraph authorities possess under part III of the Indian Telegraphic Act-1885 for implementation of the above said schemes. Any objection regarding the above schemes shall be sent to undersigned within **one month** from the date of publication of notification.

Sd/- **Executive Engineer (Elec.,),**
Major Works Division, 1st Floor, Prasarana Bhavan, Santhepete, BM Road, Hassan-573201

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521)
No: 605/EEE/MWD/AEE(O)/HVR/2021-22/57-60 Date: 07.05.2021

NOTIFICATION

KPTCL has formulated scheme under Electricity Act-2003 and the scheme is hereby published. This notification is issued for the information of the concerned persons and general public. Particulare of the scheme is as under:

(1) Name of the work: Establishing of 1X10MVA, 110/11KV Sub station at Belur(Heladahalli) in Ranebennur Taluk and Haveri District and construction of 110KV LILO line from existing 110KV Aremallapura SC tap line to proposed 110/11KV Belur(Heladahalli) Sub station for a distance of about 1.4Km in Haveri District on Partial Turnkey Basis.

(2) Cost of the project: Rs. 702.17 Lacs.

(3) Need for Sub station and line: Quality of power supply and voltage improvement in and around Belur, Udagatti, Medleri, kudurehal, Heeladahalli Villages.

(4) Line passes through: Heeladahalli Village and surroundings areas of Heeladahalli Village.

KPTCL shall have and excercise all powers which the telegraphic authority's posses under part III of the teleghaphic act 1885 for implementation of the above said schemes. Objections if any regarding the project shall be sent to the undersigned within 15 days from the date of publication of this notification.

Sd/- Executive Engineer (Ele),
Major Works Division, Haveri Dist. KPTCL, HUBBALLI.

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike
Office of the Executive Engineer, BTM Layout Division, BBMP Commercial Complex, 2nd Floor, Lashkar Hosur Road, Adugodi, Bengaluru-30
No.EE/(BTM)/Je/e-proc/03/2021-22 Date: 19-05-2021

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through GOK e-Procurement Portal Only)

Tenders for the following Goods on item rate basis are invited by the undersigned for the works mentioned below from the registered contractors of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike or any reputed agencies equivalent registration with CPWD/KPWD/Railways/MES or any State Government Organisations.

Sl. No.	Name of the work & Category	Apprx. Value of work (Rs. in Lakhs)
	Single Cover System - 1st Call	
1.	Additional works to Jaibheemanagar Samudhaya Bhavana in Ward No.172, Madiwala **(Others).**	35.00
	2nd Call	
2.	Improvement and Maintenance of Burial Ground in Ejipura Ward No.148, Ejipura **(Others).**	5.00
3.	Improvements works to Samudayabahavana, Near Aadishakthi Kaveramma Temple at V.P. Road in Ward No.172, Madiwala **(Others).**	25.00
4.	Filling of potholes and Road cut portion for the year 2019-20 in Ward No.173, Jakkasandra **(Others).**	20.00
5.	Maintenance of Burial Ground in Ejipura Ward No.148 **(SC).**	4.00
6.	Construction and Maintenance of Public Toilet in Koramangala Ward No.151 **(SC).**	7.50
7.	Improvements to Roads and drains to SC-ST Colony in Koramangala Ward No.151 **(SC).**	25.00
8.	Improvements to drains and culverts in Siddartha Colony, 2nd Block, Koramangala in Ward No.151 **(SC).**	30.00
9.	Supplying of Tractor and Labours for ward Maintenance for the year 2019-20 in Ward No.152, S.G. Palya **(SC).**	15.00
10.	Additional Improvements works to BBMP Buildings in Ward No.172, Madiwala **(SC).**	5.00
	3rd Call	
11.	Annual Maintenance of BBMP Buildings in Ward No.148, Ejipura **(Others).**	20.00
12.	Construction of Anganawadi Building at HSR 5th Sector in Ward No.173, Jakkasandra (Old Annexure 02) New Sl. No.172 **(Others).**	35.00
	5th Call	
13.	Construction of Community Hall at Gandhi Colony, Near Fare Land, Ejipura in Ward No.148, Ejipura **(Others).**	50.00
	7th Call	
14.	Improvements and Maintenance to Anganawadi Building in Old Madiwala and Govt. Building in Dollar Scheme 5th Cross in Ward No.172, Madiwala **(Others).**	20.00
15.	Construction of Anganawadi Building in 11th Main, HSR 5th Sector, Ward No.173 **(Others).**	30.00
16.	Additional Improvements to PK Rest Room at Kempegowda Play Ground, BTM 2nd Stage in Ward No.176 **(Others).**	20.00

Calendar of Events: (1) Last Date for uploading the Filled Tender Document is: **28-05-2021 up to 4:00 p.m. (2)** Date of Opening of the tender document on: **29-05-2021 at 4:30 p.m.** Further particulars can be obtained from the above office during working hours on working days or from **website: https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/-, Executive Engineer, BTM Layout Division, BBMP.

HAVE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19? CALL APTHAMITRA ON 14410
Wear Mask | 6 Feet Follow Physical Distancing | Maintain Hand Hygiene

EDUCATION. GOALS. AND GAME CHANGING DECISIONS.
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Every Monday with THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

EDITORIAL

"Nothing in life is as important as you think it is when you are thinking about it" — Daniel Kahneman

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.
— Ramnath Goenka

END THE CYCLE OF VENDETTA POLITICS IN WEST BENGAL

There can be no two opinions on the need to get to the bottom of the Narada scam in West Bengal. Just before the elections in the state in 2016, a sting operation conducted by a journalist showed several important functionaries of the ruling Trinamool Congress purportedly taking bribes. The CBI and the courts must ensure that all those involved in the bribery must be held accountable and given exemplary punishment. Already, the public has little faith in elected representatives as most, if not all, are viewed to be corrupt. So it is necessary that the guilty be brought to book. But the recent arrests of four Trinamool leaders, including two ministers in the newly constituted government, and its timing smack of partiality and selective witch-hunting. BJP leaders Mukul Roy and Suvendu Adhikari are also accused in the case, with Roy being the accused number one. While the Trinamool leaders have been arrested, the BJP duo is untouched. The only arrest made before this was of the then Burdwan Superintendent of Police S M H Mirza, also seen taking bribes, who had named Roy and claimed that he was taking the money on Roy's behalf. In the tapes, Roy is also allegedly heard saying the bribe should be paid to Mirza. So the CBI's inaction against Roy and Adhikari is clearly politically motivated. Also, the fact that the arrests came just two weeks after the BJP got drubbed fairly and squarely in a hotly contested election has not been lost on anyone.

If the CBI's arrests are clearly one-sided, the Trinamool is also to be blamed for vitiating the already surcharged political atmosphere in the state after the election results. The Trinamool cannot deny that many BJP workers were attacked and killed by its cadre in what were clearly revengeful actions. Those BJP workers who have been spared live in fear of retribution. Both sides need to bring down the temperature. Let us not forget the country is facing a massive public health crisis owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. For the sake of the nation and its people, there is a need to put politics aside and act maturely in the interest of all.

WELCOME ALL-PARTY PANEL IN TAMIL NADU

Continuing with his bipartisan approach, Chief Minister M K Stalin on Sunday constituted a 13-member all-party advisory committee of MLAs to fight the Covid. The idea apparently is to bring the collective wisdom of all stakeholders to the table to sharpen the administrative response to the pandemic. That Tamil Nadu perhaps is the only state to have such a panel—at a time when no other party wants to share the optics of providing relief to the people—shows the maturing of Stalin into a confident leader who puts the welfare of the state over individual glory. What is indeed significant is the inclusion of the AIADMK, the DMK's archenemy, in the committee. C Vijayabaskar, health minister in the outgoing AIADMK government, will represent his party on the panel led by Stalin. This does not mean that their mutual animosity is waning; it only indicates that they can still do business within the framework of democracy.

That apart, the panel comprises representatives from the Congress, BJP, VCK and CPM. The other interesting factor is the inclusion of Vaiko's MDMK, which was forced to fight on the DMK's rising sun symbol in the April elections, and a few small parties like the Puratchi Bharatham, which is an AIADMK ally. This is perhaps the first time in ages that small parties in the state will get to have a say in policymaking. Giving elected leaders, irrespective of their place on the Assembly benches, equal space to tackle something as massive as a pandemic is a welcome confidence-building measure. It would hopefully create positive vibes and build public morale to fight the virus, while not indulging in dressing up of data to suit political conveniences.

Within the first 100 days of his rule, Stalin is busy delivering on his poll promises while focusing on consolidating the goodwill of the electorate. Of course, he could look to encash the IOUs he is accumulating with smaller parties in the long run. The panel could also give him an out if the sneaky bug were to play further mischief. Who says democracy does not lend itself to good politics?

Execution requires constant review, failing which two risks arise: initiative overload and declaration of victory. A live example of both can be seen from India's recent experiences

TRANSFORMING ORGS: SLOW DOWN TO REACH FASTER

R GOPALAKRISHNAN
Author and corporate advisor.
Email: rgopal@themindworks.me

SOUMYADIP SINHA

BUILDING BUSINESSES

Transformational leaders chart the four stages of start, road map, time plan and end point. The former are planned, while the latter are flexible. Execution requires constant review and adjustment, failing which two risks arise: initiative overload and declaration of victory. A live example of both can be seen from India's recent experiences.

Initiative overload:

During the last seven years, citizens have had promises, for example, retrieving black money or beating the Covid crisis in less time than the Kurukshetra battle. The citizen has been harangued about far-reaching initiatives like demonetisation, Article 370, CAA, farm bills, $5 trillion economy and lockdowns. From a citizen perspective, the outcomes are hazy.

Using farm laws as just one example, the latest Lokniti-CSDS poll survey states that the popular mood even in far-away Assam, Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala has turned against the new farm laws. If true, the laws may have to be buried. However, citizens' adrenalin is pumped up constantly with the rhetoric of "never-before-in-seventy-years" initiatives. High decibel demagoguery and television debates pump up the initiative overload. The citizen is tired, more so after the Covid second wave.

Declaration of victory:

In 2003, a ₹150 crore "India Shining" campaign was unleashed by an overenthusiastic NDA declaring success for their initiatives. The celebratory tone lacked so much credibility that the NDA lost the 2004 elections. Victory over Covid has followed a similar pattern. It is reported that the RSS is planning a campaign called "Hum Jeetenge" to counter negativity around Covid news. If done in a defensive and arrogant manner, it could be disastrous for the NDA.

Several examples demonstrate this early victory malaise. For example, in 2017, Quint Studer wrote about how a Chicago 'Great Comeback' hospital declared victory at the first taste of success. The very next month, the hospital had to retract its celebratory self-accolades. HBS Professor John Kotter has written in *Harvard Business Review* about why transformation efforts fail. Error number 7: declaring victory too soon. On 7 June 2020, this newspaper reported Pope Francis's advice to his followers about Covid. "Thank God, we are slowly coming out, please follow the rules that help us to avoid the virus to get ahead. Don't cry victory too soon." All leaders should heed this advice.

Scientific temper:

Scientific temper is not about science. It demands an attitude of curiosity, dissent and debate. Look back to understand how epidemics ended in the past—no epidemic was eradicated within a short timeframe, like the duration of the Mahabharata battle!

Boston Review (30-6-20) tellingly reported under their 'Science and Technology' column: "The history of epidemic endings has taken many forms, and only a handful of them have resulted in the elimination of a disease…. The two faces of an epidemic, the biological and the social, are closely intertwined, but they are not the same … science is deeply contingent upon local practices."

While this report emphasises the intersection of science with social subjects, leaders may fall into the trap of excluding both science and social aspects. In transformation, you need STEM and SHAPE. Science, Technology, Engineering, Manufacturing must be accompanied by Social sciences, Humanities, Arts, People, Economy.

> Complex problems are solved through deep reflection. Vedanta advises use of the intellect rather than just the mind. Vedas advocate alignment of *manas, vaacham* and *karman*—thought, word and deed. Daniel Kahneman emphasises slower System 2 thinking

Think slow and deep:

This article is not about the pandemic. The pandemic merely illustrates one challenge of transformation. I advocate thinking slowly and deeply. A Korean proverb says, "It is when you are in a rush that you have to slow down." Vedanta advises use of the intellect rather than only the mind through *shravanam* (listening), *mananam* (thinking) and *nidhidhyasanam* (introspecting).

I quote two examples from the business world. Unilever's Path to Growth was announced in 1999. Intense programmes followed, leaving employees in a tizzy. Till 2004, the targets were not met. Soon, top management and business targets were both revised.

In 1992, Arthur Martinez was selected to lead American retail chain, Sears, against competition from entrants like Walmart. For two years, Martinez embarked on a slew of strategic initiatives, leaving the employees of the company quite breathless. He then declared the turnaround complete and successful. Soon thereafter, the company faltered, and Martinez stepped down in 1999.

An example from public life in Ecuador is terrifyingly reminiscent of events close to home. Jamil Mahuad was the immensely successful mayor of Quito from 1992 to 1998. He was popular, he walked around the city to meet his voters and he decentralised problem-solving by motivating citizens to solve their own problems. After declaring success with his Quito model, he got elected as President of his nation, Ecuador.

In this new position, Jamil could not repeat his 'people-touch activities'. Gradually, he became remote. He relied on aides to report problems and recommend solutions. Urgent actions were required for the mounting problems of Ecuador—inflation, foreign debt, bankrupt banks and devastation from an unexpected El Nino storm.

In a dramatic move, Jamil froze bank accounts and 'dollarised' the economy. The economy did not respond positively. People came out on the streets and in January 2000, a coalition of military officers forced him out of the office of President.

Such are the travails of initiative overload and declaring victory too soon. It is important to slow down to move fast.

(The author had served as Director, Tata Sons and, before that, as Vice Chairman, Hindustan Unilever. Collaborating with entrepreneur-cum-angel investor R Narayanan, he has recently co-authored a book titled "Wisdom for start-ups from grownups")

THE KERALA MODEL WILL LEAD INDIA ONE DAY

KANAM RAJENDRAN
CPI Kerala Secretary

The LDF's slogan for the 2021 Kerala Assembly elections was "LDF for sure". We were very sure that the people would give us a landmark victory. Through its welfare programmes and good governance, the party had ensured that there was no anti-incumbency factor working against it. It was during the reign of C Achutha Menon that the famous Kerala model for sustainable development was recognised by the UN. This was enhanced and given special characteristics by the LDF government.

It was proven that the Kerala model was capable of resisting Covid-19. It was not simply a medical victory. It was about ensuring that nobody would remain marginalised as a result of the virus.

According to social critic and philosopher Noam Chomsky, it was the way by which Kerala tackled Covid that made it different. When the pandemic created additional destruction by widening the gap between the rich and poor, the free market crony capitalist economy was found to be helpless in combating the impact. It became mandatory for governments to make full-fledged interventions. That's where the Kerala model succeeded.

In India, 66% of the people go to private hospitals for medical care due to the non-existence of public healthcare setups in many places and the mismanagement of the existing government ones. The governments that refrained from interventions ensured that the health sector was dominated by private players. Since the private sector lacks the bandwidth to counter the impact on the economy, most states have fallen into the grip of Covid. The collapse of the economy devastated the lives of common people. Poverty, hunger and loss of income widened the inequalities. But here again, Kerala is an exception. It tops the states in public healthcare, thanks to a strong and efficient health system. The government has a firm hold on health infrastructure and the whole sector—a reason why it was highly responsive and efficient during the pandemic. We were able to bring the death rate under control and people received the best care without having to spend a lot of money.

Thanks to five years of the LDF, our PSUs are in great shape. The whole public sector was utilised to the maximum. The oxygen plant set up by Kerala Mineral and Metals Ltd (KMML) ensured that there is an oxygen surplus in the state. To make sure that no one remained hungry, community kitchens were opened in all panchayats. The government started distributing free ration kits to people. While several states failed to utilise the free ration given by the Centre, Kerala distributed not only those ones but also kits of its own.

Kerala upholds a holistic leftist model amidst a crony capitalist world. After the 2008 global crisis, the Stiglitz report suggested making structural changes in economies. Eminent economists suggested empowering the public sector and regulating the market more rigidly. But capitalist literatures and makers of the right-wing collective consciousness neglected such warnings. In the beginning of the 90s, Nobel Laureate American economist Kenneth J Arrow wrote about why the free market should not control the medical sector. But the world, and even India, failed to listen.

PM Narendra Modi went forward with an economic model that focused on disinvesting PSUs and uprooting the reservation system. His policies pushed for privatisation and gave no importance to the lives of people. Poverty, hunger and inequality grew, and unemployment reached the sky. The purchasing power of people was destroyed and social security schemes were erased. Farmers were given low prices for their products and are now subjected to the brutal free market.

> The NDA government used Central agencies like the NIA and CBI to tarnish the state government. With the moral support of the CPI, the LDF readily took a stand against the agencies. Finally, the people of Kerala were convinced of the bias and another anti-Communist agenda bit the dust

To all these problems, the Kerala model is an alternative. In it, education is free and universal. Farmers are given higher MSP along with royalty. PSUs are preserved, running on profit and nourishing the economy. Hospitals with the best infrastructure and services are ensured. Strong PDS ensures zero hunger. The Kerala model is about human development, sustainability, improving living standards, socialist policies, democratic decentralisation, women empowerment, secularism and progressive thinking.

The prime factors for the LDF's victory are excellence in governance and welfare programmes:

1. Public sector units that were running on loss started making profits. The units that were shut down were reopened. They contributed ₹12,908 crore to the state treasury and ₹881 crore to the Union as profit share.
2. 1,589 Maveli supermarkets and 95 Sabari medical stores that sell groceries and medicines at a discount are operational under the Civil Supplies department. 88.6 lakh ration card holders were given free ration.
3. Kerala became the first state to give royalty to farmers. Nearly 5,000 acres of barren land was converted for agricultural use. It gives the highest MSP for agri products in India.
4. 4,265 landless Scheduled Tribe families were given land. In five years, 1,77,112 families have been bestowed with absolute ownership of land.
5. Financial and material assistance to marginalised communities were increased and hi-tech schools were constructed. We are aiming to turn Kerala into a knowledge society.

What makes Kerala's success shine better is its ability to overcome the hurdles put up by the Centre. Here's an account of how the BJP-led Centre treated Kerala:

1. In 2014-15, the Central share for MGNREGA in Kerala was ₹158 crore, which was reduced to ₹71 crore in 2016-17.
2. In the 2015-16 Budget, Kerala received a share of 0.91%. But in 2021, the share was reduced to 0.61%.
3. From 2011 to 2014, Kerala received more than ₹1,000 crore for Central programmes. It was reduced by 35% during the NDA rule.
4. The fund for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan came down from ₹413.43 crore to ₹206 crore.
5. Kerala was excluded from the calamity fund list even though we faced two floods.
6. It demanded ₹2,101 crore as financial help during the 2019 floods but received only ₹52.27 crore.
7. The estimated loss due to the 2018 flood was ₹26,718 crore, but the Centre sanctioned only ₹2,904 crore.

The NDA government used Central agencies like the NIA and CBI to tarnish the state government. With the moral support of the CPI, the LDF readily took a stand against the agencies. Finally, the people of Kerala were convinced of the bias and another anti-Communist agenda bit the dust.

The new government would continue the welfare schemes and move forward with the anti-fascist agenda. The Kerala model will lead India in the future. Until then the model and the state of Kerala will be a nightmare to all right-wing forces in the country.

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Another historic blunder

Shailaja Teacher won accolades not only in Kerala and India, but the entire world for her poise in handling the ongoing Covid pandemic and Nipah earlier. It is shocking that the LDF has left its best-performing minister out of the Cabinet. If new faces were the reason, why was there no new CM? It is another historic blunder by the CPM bosses, who have led the party to zero seats in Bengal.
Devadas V, Kannur

Leaves a bad taste

K K Shailaja as the health minister was doing exceedingly well and being projected by many as the next CM of Kerala. During this critical phase of Covid, her services are all the more needed and dropping her from the ministry for petty political reasons leaves a bad taste.
R Narayanan, Bengaluru

Fudging of deaths data

The report at the top of the front page says corona deaths in the country are on the decline (*Covid-19 mortality in India decelerating since April 28*, May 19). The report at the bottom of the same page appears to contradict it as it hints that Odisha is fudging the number of deaths (*Death rate hits bottom as cases double*). Is there any way to ascertain that the rest of the states are transparent in reporting the mortality figures and the death rate is actually declining in India?
Sweta Mohanty, Odisha

Reassuring news

This is with reference to *Covishield blood clot risk minuscule: Centre* (May 18). It is reassuring news for those who have already taken the first dose of Covishield and are waiting for the second. These may also be sent by the authorities to people through their WhatsApp numbers, email IDs, etc., as we usually only get a lot of fake news on social media.
K Ganesh, Coimbatore

Nothing for manufacturing

The fact that record FDI is on account of major offloading of shares by Reliance with nothing substantial towards the manufacturing sector shows there is not much to gloat about (*Are record FDI inflows a cause for celebration?* May 17). Unless substantial FDI flows towards manufacturing, Atmanirbhar Bharat will remain a distant dream.
R Sriramprasad, Bengaluru

E-pass exemption

The TN government may consider exempting those with valid proof of medical treatment together with a photo identity card from e-registration for travel within the district as many aged persons from rural areas have to go to towns to consult doctors.
K V Raghavan, Kolathur, Pudukkottai

Electric vehicles?

We are witnessing a continuous hike in fuel prices every day. No measures are seen to tackle this. More people should think of opting for electric vehicles.
Ramesh Elamon, Kerala

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TWEETS OF THE DAY

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra @priyankagandhi
Insensitive to the list released by UP Teachers Assn of 1,621 teachers who died doing duty in panchayat polls, UP govt is telling only three teachers had died

Sitaram Yechury @SitaramYechury
Modi government's claims, as always, do not match the reality of Vax supplies. Procure vaccines globally, boost domestic production

Dr Harsh Vardhan @drharshvardhan
India tested more than 20L samples for Covid-19 in last 24 hrs, the highest number of tests conducted in a single day across the world!

INDIA'S COVID TRACKER

10 STATES REPORT 74.46% OF NEW CASES

Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Haryana

Data in the last 24 hours

69.02% OF ACTIVE CASES REPORT FROM

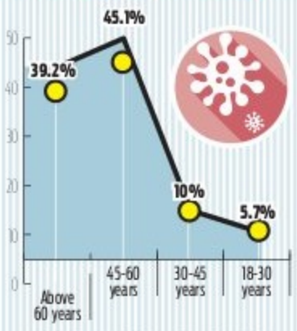
Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, UP and West Bengal

Total active cases

20 lakh
tested in last 24 hours, highest number of tests conducted in a single day across the world

18.5 crore
vaccine doses administered across the country

VACCINATION: AGE-WISE DISTRIBUTION



70,12,752
individuals in the 18-44 age group received the first dose of vaccine so far

2,19,86,363
total number of people recuperated from the disease

A healthcare worker collects a swab sample of a passenger at CSMT station in Mumbai on Wednesday | PTI

GLOBAL RELIEF

12,874 oxygen concentrators	
15,801 oxygen cylinders	**9,925** ventilators/Bi PAP
19 oxygen generation plants	**6.1** lakh Remdesivir vials

All have been delivered/dispatched to different states and UTs, says Union Health Ministry

Source: Union Health Ministry

Got Covid? Vaccine 3 months after recovery

New guidelines shared by Union government with states mention breast-feeding women can go for inoculation

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @ New Delhi

THOSE who have caught the Covid-19 infection, with or without their first vaccine shots, should wait for three months before vaccination after recovering from the illness and all breast-feeding women can go for the inoculation.

These fresh guidelines, as suggested by the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration, were accepted by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Wednesday.

The recommendations have been based on the evolving situation of the Covid-19 pandemic and emerging global scientific evidence and experience, said the government, and added that the new guidelines have been shared with the states.

The clarification sought to put to rest concerns that delaying vaccination for those infected and then recovered from Covid-19 could be largely due to vaccine shortage and may be not evidence based.

The recommendations by the group have said that for individuals having lab test proven SARS-2 Covid-19 illness, vaccination should be deferred by three months after recovery.

Also, patients who have been given anti-SARS-2 monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, should wait for three months from the date of discharge from the hospital before taking the shot.

"For individuals who have received at least the first dose and got Covid-19 infection before completion of the dosing schedule, the second dose should be deferred by three months after clinical recovery," the guidelines say.

This lady is happy to receive the Covid-19 vaccine in Patiala on Wednesday | PTI

For individuals who have received at least the first dose and got Covid-19 infection before completion of the dosing schedule, the second dose should be deferred by three months after clinical recovery

From guideline accepted by health ministry

People with other serious general illnesses requiring hospitalisation or ICU care should also wait for 4-8 weeks before getting the Covid-19 vaccine, while vaccination is recommended for all lactating women. There is no requirement for screening of the vaccine recipients by rapid antigen test prior to Covid-19 vaccination, the government has said.

An individual can donate blood after 14 days of either receipt of Covid-19 vaccine or testing RTPCR negative, if suffering from the disease.

The Centre, however, added that vaccination of pregnant women is under discussion and further deliberation by the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization.

It has written to states to direct the concerned officials to take note of these recommendations and undertake necessary action for their effective implementation. States have been advised to ensure effective dissemination of the information to service providers as well as the general public, through use of all channels of information and communication in the local languages. The Union government has also asked states to undertake training of the vaccination staff at all levels.

The fresh advisory comes soon after it was decided, based on suggestions by the expert committee, to raise the gap between two doses of Covishield to 12-16 weeks, from 6-8 weeks recommended earlier.

GRIM MILESTONE

India records highest daily death tally for any country

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

INDIA on Tuesday recorded 4,529 Covid-19 fatalities, the pandemic's highest single-daily death toll in any country so far, even though the government has maintained that the ferocious second wave is showing signs of abatement.

The previous deadliest day for a country was recorded in the United States of America in January, when 4,468 persons had succumbed to the virus.

In India, 2,83,248 deaths have now been confirmed due to the disease, of which over 1.20 lakh have been recorded since March. The grim milestone comes at a time when the number of confirmed daily infections in the country has been coming down for about a week and 2,67,334 new cases were registered in the last 24 hours, down from over 4 lakh daily infections reported in early May.

The data from the Union Health Ministry also showed that the country's total active caseload has come down to 32,26,719 after reaching a peak of over 40 lakh active cases a couple of weeks back. Over the last 24 hours, a net decline of 1,27,046 was registered in total active cases. On a good note, the highest ever for a day, more than 20 lakh tests were conducted on Tuesday.

At a press briefing on Tuesday, government authorities had insisted that the situation in India was showing signs of continued improvement but many experts believe that the true number of deaths and infections in the country could be much higher, as a large number of people dying of the disease, especially in rural areas, is not being recorded.

The figures shared by the ministry, meanwhile, showed that 10 states have reported 74.46 per cent of the new cases in the last 24 hours. Tamil Nadu has reported the highest daily new cases at 33,059, followed by Kerala, where 31,337 new cases were registered.

On a brighter note, India's daily recoveries exceeded the number of daily new cases for the sixth consecutive day. National recovery rate rose to 86.23 per cent.

States to be given 5.86 cr free vax doses till June 15

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE Union Health Ministry on Wednesday said the Centre will provide a total of 5.86 crore Covid-19 vaccine doses to states and UTs free of cost from May 1 to June 15. The Centre asked the states to prepare a district and vaccination centre-wise plan for the administration of the jabs till mid-June and publicise it to avoid overcrowding at inoculation centres.

According to the advance visibility provided by the Centre to states and UTs, a total of 5 crore 86 lakh and 29 thousand doses will be provided to the states under the central quota. Under this quota, while 70 per cent of the vaccine doses are to be used for the second jabs of the most vulnerable 45-plus population, 30 per cent is to be used for administering first jabs to those in this age group.

No vaccine doses supplied by the Centre, however, can be used for administering shots to the 18-44 year age group.

In addition, as per information received from manufacturers of the Covishield and Covaxin vaccines, 4 crore, 87 lakh and 55 thousand doses are available till the end of next month for direct procurement by the states and UTs. Last week, the government said it was supplying states with 1.92 crore doses of Covid-19 vaccine between May 16 and 31 which included 162.5 lakh doses of Covishield and 29.49 lakh doses of Covaxin.

On Wednesday, the Centre asserted that it has already shared a clear supply timeline with states till June and to ensure efficient and judicious utilisation of available doses for successful implementation of Covid-19 vaccination drive, states have been asked to prepare a clear plan for this period. States have also been instructed to use multiple media platforms for dissemination of such a plan to enhance awareness among the masses.

Also, vaccination centres have been advised to publish their vaccination calendar on CoWIN platform in advance.

Double rate of ventilation in indoor spaces: New guidelines

RICHA SHARMA @ New Delhi

WITH increasing evidence of airborne transmission of SARS-CoV-2 coming through and more threat in indoor spaces, the Centre has issued new guidelines recommending doubling of ventilation rate in indoor spaces in present coronavirus scenarios.

The Council for Scientific and Industrial (CSIR) issued guidelines on 'Ventilation of Residential and Office for SARS-CoV-2 Virus' by modifying the existing National Building Code, 2016, prescribing Air Changes per Hour (ACH) values in indoor spaces, looking into the minimum recommended ventilation rates of 10 liters per second per person.

The guidelines have been proposed for naturally ventilated residential and office buildings, and mechanically ventilated residential and office buildings based on scientific and engineering knowledge available with the CSIR. "When contaminants are to be removed from air, the amount of fresh air required to dilute indoor air depends on the air space available per person and the degree of physical activity. The amount of air decreases as the air space available per person increases, and it may vary from 20 cubic meter to 30 cubic meter per person per hour. This would be a business as usual scenario without considerations for airborne transmission of pathogens," said the new guidelines.

However, in Covid-19 situations, 36 cubic meter per person is recommended. Looking into the minimum recommended ventilation rates of 10 litres per person per second for Covid-like situations, ventilation rates in the NBC have been modified.

"It is recommended that in a heavy smoke zone area and if the room is below the ground, the ventilation rates as specified by NBC are to be increased by 50 per cent. Even as the debate on the extent of contribution of airborne mode of transmission of Covid-19 continues, this route is now considered to be important by the World Health Organization and health authorities in several countries," it added.

The guidelines mention that during breathing, singing, talking, forces are generated due to rapid shearing flows, vocal cord movement, opening and closing of terminal airways. As a result, droplets of different sizes loaded with virus are generated and expelled, especially by asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic infected people.

The most effective manner of reducing the effects on any contaminant is by dilution with fresh air. Thus, ventilation is recognized as an efficient method for reducing the airborne transmission of pathogens.

Even as debate on the extent of contribution of airborne mode of transmission of Covid-19 continues, this route is now considered important by WHO & authorities in several countries — New guidelines

Uttarakhand govt to provide free treatment to labourers, families

VINEET UPADHYAY @ Dehradun

THE Uttarakhand government has decided to provide 6.75 lakh labourers and their 30 lakh family members/dependents free-of-cost treatment of Covid-19.

Harak Singh Rawat, state cabinet minister who is also in charge of the labour department, said, "All assistance will be provided to the workers and their dependents who are engaged in several projects. Assistance will reach the last person in the queue."

Labourers from UP, Bihar and other states are working in mega projects such as Char Dham Pariyojana, Rishikesh-Karnprayag railway line, mining fields and many others.

Labour department officials said the 6.75 lakh workers registered with the state Employee State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) will be eligible for the assistance. Harbans Singh Chug, secretary labour, said: "These workers will get medical help in government as well as private hospitals according to Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS). Officials said the workers earning less than Rs 21,000 per month would get free medical help from private and government hospitals.

Meanwhile, the Uttarakhand High Court on Wednesday directed the state government to file its reply on the vaccination of thousands of workers from Nepal working in various projects in the state. The directions came from a division bench comprising Chief Justice RS Chauhan and Justice Alok Kumar Verma.

Religious figures criticise linking Kumbh with Covid

Several prominent Hindu religious figures on Wednesday criticised attempts to link the recent Kumbh Mela in Haridwar with the spread of Covid-19, saying it is an "insult" to people's faith and traditions.

A Covid-19 patient receives oxygen from a makeshift arrangement outside a government hospital in Jammu on Wednesday | PTI

Centre, AAP spar over Singapore tweet

NEW DELHI: The Centre on Wednesday hit out at Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal for his comments that a new variant of Covid has been detected in Singapore after the Southeast Asian nation summoned the Indian envoy and objected to the "unfounded assertions".

Amid the diplomatic row, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said the Kejriwal "does not speak for India" and that the two countries have been solid partners in combating the pandemic. MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said Indian High Commissioner P Kumaran clarified to the Singapore government that the Delhi CM had no competence to comment on Covid-19 variants. "Singapore and India have been solid partners in the fight against Covid-19. Appreciate Singapore's role as a logistics hub and oxygen supplier. Their gesture of deploying military aircraft to help us speaks of our exceptional relationship," Jaishankar tweeted.

"However, irresponsible comments from those who should know better can damage long-standing partnerships. So, let me clarify - Delhi CM does not speak for India," he added.

In a post on Tuesday, Kejriwal requested the Centre to suspend flights to and from Singapore hinting at the possibility of a new strain detected in Singapore. In a tweet, he said the new form of Covid was said to be dangerous for children, and may come as a third wave to India. In its statement, the Singapore foreign ministry said there is no "Singapore variant" and that the strain prevalent in many of the COVID-19 cases in recent weeks is the B.1.617.2 variant, which was first detected in India.

"Politicians should stick to facts! There is no 'Singapore variant'," Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan tweeted.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) defended its supremo with Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia saying his remarks were meant to express worry for the children of the country, but the Centre is only focusing on its image abroad. The BJP on its part alleged it was part of the chief minister's "toolkit to spread confusion and anarchy". *ENS*

PIL AGAINST TRIALS ON 2-18 AGE GROUP

New Delhi: The Delhi HC on Wednesday issued a notice to the Centre and Bharat Biotech on a plea filed against conducting the Phase 2 and 3 clinical trial Covaxin Covid-19 vaccine on the 2-18 age group. The PIL was filed to set aside the permission granted by DCGI to Bharat Biotech for conducting the trial.

AIR TRAFFIC FELL 27% IN APRIL

New Delhi: The second wave of Covid-19 put a sudden break on the rising domestic air traffic in April. Nearly 57.25 lakh domestic passengers travelled by air in April, which is 26.8% lower than 78.22 lakh who travelled in March. Occupancy rate of airlines also witnessed decline.

J&K reports more than 72,000 Covid cases, 963 deaths in 18 days this month

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

J&K has recorded over 72,000 Covid cases and 963 deaths in 18 days of this month, which accounts for 28.58% of the total cases and 29.24% of total deaths in the UT since the outbreak of the pandemic last year.

The summer capital Srinagar accounts for 20.33% of the new cases in May while Jammu district accounts for 38% of deaths in the Union Territory this month.

From May 1 to 18, J&K's Covid tally increased from 1,79,915 to 2,51,919. In eight days, J&K's Covid tally increased by 72,004 cases. It accounts for 28.58% of total cases in J&K since the outbreak of Covid last year.

JAMMU ACCOUNTS FOR 38% OF FATALITIES

Jammu recorded 366 of the 963 deaths due to Covid-19 in J&K this month so far. Jammu district accounts for 38% of the total deaths in the Union Territory this month

The tally of active cases increased from 30,343 on May 1 to 50,925 on May 18. The Jammu region accounted for 9,849 cases and Kashmir, 10733 cases.

In 18 days of May, 963 people in J&K died of Covid. Of them, 613 died in the Jammu region and 350 in Kashmir. The deaths in May so far account for 29.24% of the total deaths in J&K due to Covid since the outbreak of the pandemic last year.

The twin capital cities of Srinagar and Jammu have been the worst-hit district due to Covid. In the first 18 days of May, cases in Srinagar increased by 14,699 and the tally stood at 59,191. Srinagar, which is the summer capital of J&K, witnessed 20.33% of the total cases recorded in J&K in 18 days of May.

In Srinagar, 155 persons have died of Covid in the last 18 days. It means Srinagar has accounted for 16% of the total deaths in J&K from May 1-18. Jammu, which is the winter capital of J&K, recorded 10,234 cases in the first 18 days of May. It accounts for 14.21% of new cases in J&K this month.

648 CALLS FOR HELP
From urgent requirement for a ventilator bed to need for plasma, about 648 calls of help were received by the National Commission for Women for pregnant women in the last 20 days

3 CUSTOMS OFFICIALS ARRESTED FOR TAKING BRIBES IN DELHI

	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	36	25	Mumbai	32	28
Bhopal	34	22	Panaji	31	26
Jaipur	31	23	Patna	36	23
Amritsar	36	23	Lucknow	30	24
Chennai	34	27	Port Blair	31	25
Kolkata	38	28	Imphal	29	18
Srinagar	26	12	Chandigarh	26	21

An aerial view of a cyclone-affected area of Gujarat on Wednesday. At least 45 people were killed in the state | PTI

Cyclone Tauktae: PM does aerial survey in Gujarat

Announces ₹1,000 crore for immediate relief activities in the state

Prime Minister Narendra Modi conducts an aerial survey of areas affected by Cyclone Tauktae in Gujarat | EXPRESS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

AFTER conducting an aerial survey of the cyclone-affected areas of Gujarat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday announced ₹1,000 crore for immediate relief activities in the state.

The Centre will set up an inter-ministerial team, which will visit Gujarat and assess the extent of the damage.

The Prime Minister on Wednesday undertook an aerial survey of Una (Gir Somnath district), Jafrabad (Amreli), Mahua (Bhavnagar) in Gujarat and Diu. Later, he chaired a meeting in Ahmedabad to review the relief and rehabilitation measures being undertaken.

The Prime Minister announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh to the next of kin of the deceased and ₹50,000 to those seriously injured by the cyclone in Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan and the Union Territories of Daman and Diu, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

> PM assured people in Gujarat that the Centre will closely work with the state government at this difficult time, extend all possible assistance
>
> PMO

The Prime Minister said the Centre is working closely with the governments of the affected state. "Immediate financial assistance for these states will also be given after the respective state governments share their assessments with the Centre," the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in a media statement.

"Prime Minister assured people in Gujarat that the Centre will closely work with the state government at this difficult time, extend all possible assistance for restoration and rebuilding of the infrastructure in the affected areas," the PMO said. The PM also took stock of the Covid situation.

Why Modi only visited Guj, ask Maha leaders

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Mumbai

LEADERS of Maharashtra's Maha Vikas Aghadi government criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for visiting just Gujarat and announcing an immediate relief package for that state when five other states have also been affected by the Cyclone Tauktae.

The NCP minister Nawab Malik asked why Prime Minister Narendra Modi was not visiting areas of Maharashtra hit by cyclonic storm Tauktae, even as he was conducting an aerial survey of some of the cyclone-affected parts of neighbouring Gujarat and Diu.

Is this not "clear-cut discrimination"? Maharashtra minister and NCP's national spokesperson Nawab Malik asked.

"In Konkan, this is mango season and the farms of many mango farmers got damaged by the cyclone. Many trees were uprooted. We would have been happy if PM Narendra Modi visited these areas. Narendra Modi is PM for all India, not for only Gujarat state," Malik said

Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan said tweeted, "#CycloneTauktae ravaged the West coast of the country. It affected 5 states. Yet, PM @narendramodi toured & announced financial aid only to Gujarat. Why is he behaving like a PM of Gujarat?"

NARADA STING OPERATION

Tapes not tampered, CBI tells court

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Kolkata

THE Central Bureau of Investigation, in its 53-page charge-sheet against three Trinamool Congress MLAs, a former mayor of Kolkata, and an IPS officer, said the footage recorded during the Narada sting operation was not tampered or edited.

"The footages were sent to the the Central Forensic Science Laboratory, and it was found that the videos were not edited or tampered," the CBI told the court.

It also mentioned that the voice samples collected from the accused matched with the audio in the video footage. The CBI on Monday arrested TMC ministers Subrata Mukherjee and Firhad Hakim, MLA Madan Mitra, former mayor of Kolkata Sovan Chatterjee and IPS officer SMH Mirza.

In the charge-sheet, the central agency said it did not get necessary permissions to start the investigation into other accused who were members of Parliament at the time of committing the offence. The CBI told the court that since the crime took place in 2014, other accused in the case like Mukul Roy, presently the BJP's national vice president, BJP MLA Suvendu Adhikari, Saugata Roy, Kakali Ghosh Dastidar and Apurupa Poddar represented the TMC in the Parliament.

TMC leaders to remain in jail as HC adjourns hearing

PRANAB MONDAL @ Kolkata

THE hearing on Calcutta High Court's order staying an interim bail for three Trinamool Congress MLAs, who were arrested by the CBI in connection with the Narada sting operation case, was adjourned on Wednesday.

The court will hear the matter on Thursday at 2 pm.

During the hearing, the division bench comprising the chief justice, asked Solicitor General of India Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, whether it was necessary to keep the accused in judicial custody amid the pandemic.

Mehta, while arguing for the transfer of the trial of four accused to some other state, said CM Mamata Banerjee went to the CBI's office and demanded unconditional release of three MLAs. He alleged that the chief minister's visit to the CBI office and TMC supporters' violent agitation were part of a well-designed plan to build pressure on the investigating agency.

"On Monday, the accused could not be produced in the court physically because of the assembly of thousands of party supporters, who pelted stones at the central force personnel guarding the CBI's office. The chief minister staged a dharna at the CBI's office. The law minister, along with party supporters, was in the lower court to influence the legal process. If the agency arrests more accused in coming days, such mayhem may again take place," Mehta said. while pleading for the transfer of the case to another state.

Niladri Bhattcharya, a lawyer for arrested TMC leaders, arrives at Calcutta HC on Wednesday | PTI

The CBI's special court on Monday granted interim bail to TMC ministers Subrata Mukherjee, Firhad Hakim, MLA Madan Mitra and former mayor Sovan Chatterjee. Within a couple of hours, the CBI moved the high court and the interim bail order stayed.

While countering Mehta's submission, senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for the accused, said to protest is a democratic right. "The arrests were nothing other than revenge for the BJP's defeat in Bengal elections. Three of her party MLAs were arrested, and this was why the chief minister went to the CBI's office. There was no instigation by party leaders. The agitation was reflection of people's dissent after the MLAs whom they elected were arrested."

The Narada sting tapes, which were made public in 2016, were claimed to have been shot in 2014, wherein people resembling TMC ministers, MPs and MLAs were allegedly seen receiving money from a fictitious company in lieu of promised favours.

PLEA IN S.C. FOR PRESIDENT'S RULE

In the wake of the post-election violence in West Bengal, a petition was filed before the Supreme Court on Wednesday seeking the President's rule in the state under Article 356 of the Constitution. The plea filed by senior advocate Ghanshyam Upadhyay from Mumbai has also sought the constitution of an SIT to probe the killing of sixteen BJP supporters in the state. "From the evidence which has so far surfaced and is in the public domain, it is discernible that perpetrators of the crime of massacre killings of 16 BJP workers are none other than the goons of TMC and such killings have taken place at the instance and behest of people in power including CM," the petition said

Tensions in Rajasthan Cong as Gehlot accused of ignoring MLAs

RAJESH ASNANI @ Jaipur

A day after the resignation of Congress MLA Hemaram Chaudhary, the internal politics of Rajasthan Congress is on the boil. Another MLA from Sachin Pilot's camp, Vedprakash Solanki on Wednesday came out in support of Chaudhary, saying the demands of the party MLAs are not being heard by the Ashok Gehlot Government. Solanki has threatened that he too will resign if there's no change to the present scenario.

"Many MLAs feel the same. There are MLAs from every faction. It is not about any particular faction. Senior MLAs are not being heard in the government. Many MLAs feel helplessness. Hemaram couldn't tolerate this and hence resigned. "

Ashok Gehlot

Justifying Hemaram's move Solanki further said, "There is no one more senior and honest MLA than Hemaram Chaudhary in the Congress. Let the high command investigate why such a senior and honest MLA was forced to resign? If a junior MLA like me resigns, it is not a big deal, but a leader like Hemaram Chaudhary had to resign because his legitimate demands were not being heard." Like Hemaram, Vedprakash is also a staunch Sachin Pilot loyalist.

PULSE IMPORT

RSS affiliate attacks govt over new policy

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

BHARTIYA Kisan Sangh (BKS), the farmer's wing of the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (RSS), on Wednesday demanded that the Centre rethink the decision to lift the ban on import of pulses and oilseeds, saying it has sent a wrong message to the farming community ahead of the Kharif season.

The BKS also demanded that the Centre extend the repayment schedule for the Kisan credit cards (KCC) dues.

Stating that there are no concerns on the production front for pulses, the BKS secretary general Badri Narayan Choudhary said the government needs to address the supply and distribution issues. "The decision to import pulses has come at a time when the farmers are preparing for the Kharif season when these varieties of pulses are sowed," said Choudhary.

The BKS leader warned that the farmers may think that they don't need to sow the pulses this Kharif season since the new policy will prevent them from fetching remunerative prices. "Everyone talks of making India self-reliant in pulses and oilseeds. But when the time comes they don't take the right decision. This decision of the Ministry of Commerce will dishearten the farmers," added Choudhary.

Rural areas of Telangana resisting Covid tests

CONTINUED FROM P1

IN Telangana, the highest caseload in the last one month was reported from Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, Rangareddy, and Medchal districts. These three districts, with infections over 10,000 each, have the highest urban population in the state. However, the situation in districts with tier-2 cities and small towns remained a matter of concern.

"There is staunch resistance to even get a Covid-19 test done due to stigma and fear of eventuality," said Sreeharsha Thanneru of Rythu Swarajya Vedika, which is working extensively to provide relief to rural pockets of the state. He observed that in many villages and small towns the vaccine acceptance was also poor.

In Karnataka, while Bengaluru and other urban centres are showing some signs of improvement in Covid-19 situation, rural areas continue to suffer. Although there is no shocking increase in the number of fresh cases yet in the rural areas, experts say inter-district travellers moving to their native places in the rural areas may be carrying the infection and spreading it there.

In Kerala, where the rural-urban divide is not so well defined, the Covid-19 spread has been more or less uniform across the state with areas with higher population density reporting higher number of cases. "In Kerala, cities where most people reside like Ernakulam, Kozhikode and Thiruvananthapuram have more Covid cases as compared to the interior parts of the districts," said Dr Praveen G S, an epidemiologist.

According to Rijo M John, a health economist, the state has a good network of primary health centres across the rural areas, which has been doing testing and providing primary care to Covid patients.

The infection spread in rural Odisha is fast and furious. Hundreds of miles away from the urban localities, the virus has reached the particularly vulnerable tribal groups - Bondas and Dongria Kondhs who were relatively untouched in the first wave. Health department sources said overall 58% Covid infections in the state are from the rural hinterlands.

In Madhya Pradesh, the situation in some rural districts especially those bordering Uttar Pradesh is alarming with daily spike staying in three digits.

In Chhattisgarh, on any given day in May, the number of new cases in urban regions was less than half of what was reported from rural areas. On May 1, rural positive cases were 10,204 while urban areas reported 5,695. On May 15, the figure decreased to 5,506 in rural and 2,158 in urban zones.

HC allows Delhi univ prof to be shifted to hospital of his choice

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR
@ Mumbai

THE Bombay High Court on Wednesday allowed the shifting of Delhi University Professor Hany Babu to Breach Candy hospital by Thursday for medical treatment. He is an accused in Bhima Koregaon case.

Prof Hany Babu has tested positive for Covid 19 positive and is also suffering from black fungus infection. Last week, authorities of the Taloja prison in Navi Mumbai brought him to the J J Hospital, from where he was shifted to the G T Hospital.

A bench comprising Justices SJ Kathawala and Surendra Tavade said the patient deserves to get the medical treatment of his choice, given the current situation.

The NIA had opposed saying said the city-based J J Hospital, KEM Hospital, Nair Hospital were all equipped to treat Babu.

Meanwhile the court also directed the Dean of Sir JJ hospital to constitute an panel to examine the health of Father Stan Swamy. The bench also directed the state government to submit a report of the medical examination by May 21.The court asked the prison authorities to arrange for him to be produced before the HC via video-conferencing at 4 pm on May 21.

Call to add more specialists to Covid task force

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray is being guided by a task force of medical experts lead by Dr Sanjay Oak. Oak has worked as the Dean of the BMC-run KEM hospital. He is a specialist in pediatric surgery and laparoscopy. Now, many have questioned why the task force does not have specialists from areas like microbiology, epidemiology, immunology or pathologists. There's a general feeling that if specialists from these areas are added to the task force, the state will stand to benefit as they can provide better advice on various strains of the virus and opportunistic infections like mucormycosis, cytomegalovirus etc.

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI
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MUMBAI DIARY

Opposition attacks Thackeray's style of functioning

Maharashtra's BJP-led Opposition have criticised Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray for running the government from the comforts of his home. It has asked Uddhav to come out and visit various parts of the state to take stock of the damage done by the pandemic and the cyclone. Responding to the criticism, the Maha Vikas Aghadi government asked the Opposition to tell the same thing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who the state government said, comes out of the PMO only to attend elections rallies in poll-bound states. The government criticized the PM over not giving press conferences or visiting his constituency in Uttar Pradesh. It asked the PM to visit River Ganga to understand the pain of the people who's near and dears ones have been unceremoniously buried on the banks of the river.

Will Raksha Khadse follow father-in-law?

Though BJP MP Raksha Khadse's father-in-law Eknath Khadse has joined the Nationalist Congress Party, Raksha has maintained a studied silence over the question of her following suit. Besides, Eknath Khadse has also clarified that his daughter-in-law will remain in the BJP. However, since Raksha recently wrote a letter to the Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers DV Sadnanda Gawda complaining about the high price of fertilizers, there have been speculations about her quitting the BJP and following the footsteps of her father-in-law to the NCP.

Tauktae: Ajit Pawar steals the show

On Monday morning, with Cyclone Tauktae approaching Maharashtra, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar reached the Emergency Management & Control Room at the Mantralaya and started monitoring the situation. Soon, videos and photos of him holding meetings and taking stock of the situation went viral. Praise poured in for the Deputy CM. Meanwhile, it did not go unnoticed that Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray was nowhere in the picture. . To salvage the situation, Aditya Thackeray arrived at the BMC's disaster management room in the evening and took stock of the situation.

ISRAEL ARMY WIDENS AIRSTRIKES DESPITE INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE

Air attacks kill 6 across Gaza | US administration calls for winding down of bombardment

Palestinians inspect the damage from an early morning Israeli airstrike in Gaza City on Wednesday | AP/PTI

GAZA CITY

ISRAELI airstrikes killed at least six people across the Gaza Strip and destroyed the home of an extended family early Wednesday. Despite growing international pressure for a cease-fire, the military said it widened its strikes on militant targets in the Palestinian territory's south to blunt continuing rocket fire from Hamas.

Residents surveyed the piles of bricks, concrete and other debris that had once been the home of 40 members of al-Astal family in the southern Gaza town of Khan Younis. They said a warning missile struck the building five minutes before the airstrike, allowing everyone to escape.

Ahmed al-Astal, a university professor, described a scene of panic before the airstrike hit, with men, women and children racing out of the building. "We had just gotten down to the street, breathless, when the devastating bombardment came," he said. "They left nothing but destruction, the children's cries filling the street. ... This is happening, and there is no one to help us. We ask God to help us."

> **We had just gotten down to the street, breathless, when the devastating bombardment came. They left nothing but destruction, the children's cries filling the street**
>
> Ahmed al-Astal, a university prof

The Israeli military said it struck a militant tunnel network around the towns of Khan Younis and Rafah, with 52 aircraft hitting 40 underground targets. Gaza's Health Ministry said a woman was killed and eight people were wounded in those strikes. Hamas-run Al-Aqsa radio said one of its reporters was killed in an airstrike in Gaza City. Among the six killed Wednesday were also two people who died when warning missiles crashed into their apartment.

The latest strikes came as diplomatic efforts aimed at a cease-fire gathered strength and Gaza's infrastructure, already weakened by a 14-year blockade, rapidly deteriorated.

The Biden administration was privately encouraging Israel to wind down its bombardment of Gaza. Egyptian negotiators also were working to halt the fighting, and while they have not made progress with Israel, they were optimistic international pressure would force it to the table. Officials discussed the sensitive diplomacy on condition of anonymity.

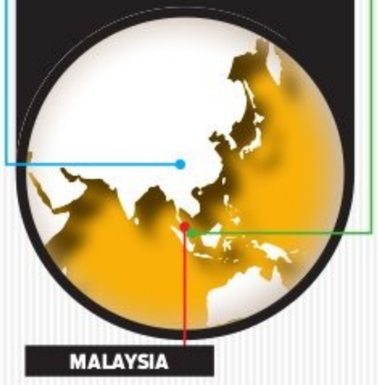
But it was still unclear if or how soon those efforts would yield results. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel hopes to restore quiet "quickly" but did not exclude the possibility of further escalation. "You can either conquer them, and that's always an open possibility, or you can deter them," he told foreign ambassadors. "We are engaged right now in forceful deterrence, but I have to say, we don't rule out anything." *AP*

All eyes on Hezbollah as tensions rise on Israel border

BEIRUT: Israel's deadly Gaza offensive has many eyes trained on the Lebanese border for a Hezbollah reaction, but observers argue the Iran-backed movement is unlikely to risk an all-out conflict. Incidents at the border in recent days have raised the temperature but, with Lebanon already on its knees amid a deep political and economic crisis, the Shiite group seems intent on refraining from an escalation. "There is nothing that currently suggests escalation," said Sadiq al-Nabulsi, a Lebanese academic close to Hezbollah. "But the decision to go to war traditionally falls on Israel."

Hezbollah and the Palestinian Hamas, both designated as terrorist groups by Israel and much of the West, have mended fences after ending up on opposing sides of the Syrian war a decade ago. Hezbollah, founded in the 1980s to fight Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, has grown into Iran's main regional proxy with operatives in Syria, Iraq and Yemen. The only Lebanese faction to have kept its weapons after the 1975-90 civil war, Hezbollah now has a more powerful arsenal than the Lebanese national army. It justifies this by emphasising its role of "resistance" against the Israeli enemy, a theme that still occupies a central place in the rhetoric of the movement. AFP

ASIA MATTERS



CHINA

US Navy's passage via Taiwan Strait protested

Beijing: China on Wednesday protested the latest passage by a US Navy ship through the Taiwan Strait, calling it a provocation that undermined peace and stability in the region. The US Navy's 7th Fleet said that the guided missile destroyer USS Curtis Wilbur conducted a routine Taiwan Strait transit on Tuesday in accordance with international law. The passage 'demonstrates the US commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific'. "The United States military will continue to fly, sail, and operate anywhere international law allows," the Navy said in a statement. While the strait is in international waters, China claims self-governing Taiwan as its own territory and regards the US Navy's presence in the area as a show of support for the island's democratic government. AP

MALAYSIA

Covid situation 'dire' as country logs record cases

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia on Wednesday reported a record 6,075 coronavirus cases in a single day, with authorities warning of a "dire" situation as hospitals rapidly fill up in the worst-hit areas. The Southeast Asian nation has been battling a growing outbreak for months and had already tightened curbs nationwide ahead of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr last week. But infections have continued to rise and authorities are now considering tougher lockdowns in some areas. AFP

SINGAPORE

Indian-origin man escapes gallows

Singapore: A 50-year-old Malaysian of Indian descent escaped the gallows in Singapore after he was acquitted of drug trafficking charges by the High Court here on Wednesday, according to a media report. Mangalagiri Dhruva Kumar, a driver by profession, was accused of driving into Singapore on May 16, 2014, and handing a bag containing the heroin to a woman named Shanti Krishnan, The Straits Times reported. In a written judgement, Justice Valerie Thean said the only evidence that Mangalagiri had supplied the drugs was Shanti's testimony. But the judge concluded that Shanti's evidence was not reliable. Shanti's testimony in court also deviated from her statements to narcotics officers, taken in the days following her arrest in May 2014. PTI

Spanish soldiers assist migrant minors after they arrived swimming to the Spanish enclave of Ceuta on Wednesday | AFP

Spain struggles to handle migrant influx

CEUTA

SPAIN'S north African enclave of Ceuta awoke to a humanitarian crisis on Wednesday after thousands of migrants who crossed over from Morocco spent the night sleeping where they could find shelter.

Exhausted by either scaling a double-wide border fence or swimming in the Mediterranean, some migrants spent the night in an overcrowded warehouse under the gaze of Spanish police. More than 8,000 people crossed into Spanish territory during the previous two days, with many risking their lives by swimming around a breakwater to reach a beach on the European side.

Spain's Interior Ministry said that it had returned roughly half of the migrants, but there were many unaccompanied minors which Spanish law says must be taken into care by authorities.

Many shopkeepers kept their stores shuttered, while local schools in the city of 85,000 reported that attendance dropped by 60 per cent.

While Morocco was tightening controls of a border after two days of allowing crossings, Spanish authorities increased their criticism of counterparts in Rabat.

"This is an act of defiance," Prime Minister Pedro S'nchez told Spain's Parliament."The lack of border control by Morocco is not a show of disrespect of Spain, but rather for the European Union."

Foreign Minister Arancha Gonz'lez Laya also increased her tone on Wednesday, saying for the first time in public that Spain believes Morocco loosened its border control to retaliate for Spain having given medical assistance to the head of the Western Sahara liberation movement, a disputed territory to Morocco's south. *AP*

Quake rattles Nepal, dozens of houses flattened

KATHMANDU

A 5.8-MAGNITUTE earthquake struck Nepal's western Lamjung district on Wednesday, injuring at least six persons and damaging dozens of houses, officials said.

The epicentre of the quake, which occurred at 5:4am (05:27 IST), was located at Marshyangdi Rural Municipality of the district, 200 km west of Kathmandu.

The quake damaged around two dozen houses and left six people injured, The Kathmandu Post reported. According to the National Earthquake Monitoring and Research Centre, two tremors of magnitudes 4.0 and 5.3 were also recorded in the district later. The report said that around 20 small tremors have been felt until 10am since the first quake hit the district.

Altogether, four earthquakes from mild to moderate hit Lamjung.

They were known as the aftershocks of the devastating 2015 earthquake that hit Gorkha district. Lumjung is 75 km west of Gorkha.

According to Inspector Jagdish Regmi of the District Police Office, six people have been injured in the earthquake. *PTI*

EXPRESS READ

US writer Gloria Steinem wins top Spanish prize

Madrid: A Spanish foundation on Wednesday awarded one of the country's most prestigious awards to US writer and activist Gloria Steinem. The jury that decides the Princess of Asturias Awards announced that Steinem has won its annual prize for communication and humanities. It praised 87-year-old Steinem's long career in journalism, her bestselling books and her dedication to feminism since the 1960s, ensuring her place as "one of the most significant and iconic figures of the women's rights movement" in the United States. The 50,000-euro award ($61,000) is one of eight prizes, including in the arts, social sciences and sports, handed out annually by a foundation named for Spanish Crown Princess Leonor.

US tips prompt German raids over child abuse pics

Berlin: German authorities searched more than 40 apartments and other buildings in Berlin on Wednesday in connection with the spread of child abuse images, after receiving tips from the US authorities. The German news agency DPA quoted Berlin's criminal police office as saying that 250 investigators were involved in raids against 42 suspects, all of them men between the ages of 17 and 84. Two-thirds of the men were already known to police, half of them in connection with sexual offenses, senior investigator Norma Schuermann said.

Belgian search for man on terror list enters Day 2

Brussels: The search for an armed man who is on a Belgian terror watchlist because of his extreme right sympathies and who had threatened several people, including a top virologist, entered a second day on Wednesday. Justice Minister Vincent Van Quickenborne described the man as an 'acute threat' and is known for his extreme right sympathies. Earlier this month, he had threatened several people, including Marc Van Ranst, one of the best-known virologists working on containing the Covid-19 pandemic.

Iceland sets stage for first US-Russia meet since Biden assumed office

REYKJAVIK

TOP diplomats from the United States and Russia are set to square off this week in Iceland for their first face-to-face encounter that comes as ties between the nations have deteriorated sharply in recent months.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Russia's longtime Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov plan to talk Wednesday on the sidelines of an Arctic Council meeting in the Icelandic capital of Reykjavik, a city with deep history in US-Russian relations.

Even before the talks, the two diplomats laid down near diametrically opposed positions for the meeting, previewing what is likely to be a difficult and contentious exchange.

The nuclear powers are at odds on myriad issues including Ukraine, the Arctic, Russia's treatment of opposition figure Alexey Navalny and accusations of cybermalfeasance, including claims that Russia-based hackers were responsible for a ransomware attack on a key US pipeline.

"It would be our preference to have a more stable and more predictable relationship with Russia," Blinken said on Tuesday.

"At the same time, we've been very clear that if Russia chooses to take reckless or aggressive actions that target our interests or those of our allies and partners, we'll respond," he said. *AP*

VOICE OF PROTEST

Officers wave flags of police unions near a banner reading "paid to serve, not to die" as they gather for a rally in front of the National Assembly in Paris on Wednesday to demand harsher punishment for attacks on cops, two weeks after an officer was shot dead while investigating drug deals | AFP

Donald Trump faces New York state criminal probe, upping indictment threat

NEW YORK

DONALD Trump and his family faced the increasing likelihood of criminal charges Wednesday after New York state's prosecutor said it was working with Manhattan investigators in its probe into the former president's business dealings.

The office of New York state Attorney General Letitia James announced late Tuesday it was investigating the Trump Organisation in a "criminal capacity." Previously, it had said its probe into possible tax, insurance and bank fraud was through civil proceedings, which do not carry the threat of an indictment or imprisonment.

Assets in question

Attorney General Letitia James is also looking at issues relating to a Trump office building in New York City, a hotel in Chicago and a golf course near Los Angeles. A series of court rulings have forced Trump's company to turn over troves of records

Trump denies wrongdoing and released a statement Wednesday describing the investigation and the parallel criminal probe by Manhattan's district attorney as "a continuation of the greatest political witch hunt in the history of the United States."

The prosecutors in both Manhattan and New York state are Democrats.

"We have informed the Trump Organization that our investigation into the organization is no longer purely civil in nature," said a spokesman for James.

"We are now actively investigating the Trump Organisation in a criminal capacity, along with the Manhattan DA," Fabien Levy, the spokesman, added. The Trump Organization is the holding company for hundreds of Trump entities, ranging from hotels to golf courses.

It is not listed on the stock exchange and is therefore not required to report its accounts. AFP

Major US pipeline CEO admits to paying $4.4 million in ransom to hackers

NEW YORK

COLONIAL Pipeline paid $4.4 million in ransom to hackers after a cyberattack because it was "the right thing to do for the country," the US company's head said, according to a Wall Street Journal report Wednesday.

Joseph Blount told the newspaper he recognized the payment was a "highly controversial decision," but that it was a necessary action given the debilitating impact of the multi-day shutdown on the United States. "I will admit that I wasn't comfortable seeing money go out the door to people like this," Blount told the publication. "But it was the right thing to do for the country."

His remarks amount to the first public acknowledgement by the company of the ransom payment. Colonial announced last Thursday it had restarted operations and resumed fuel deliveries to all markets after completing shutting down the line on May 7 following the cyberattack.

The pipeline's shutdown caused panic buying in the eastern United States and a spike in gasoline prices as Washington waived clean air regulations and rules on shipping and trucking to alleviate shortages. Unknown actors last Friday shut down the servers of Russia-based cyber-extortionist Darkside, which was behind the ransomware scam.

After making the ransom payment on the night of May 7, Colonial Pipeline received a decryption tool from the hackers. The ransom payment was made in bitcoin, the Journal reported, citing a person familiar with the matter.

While the pipeline's flow has returned to normal, the episode will cost Colonial tens of millions of dollars to completely restore the operations. *AFP*

Market Watch

MARKET			GOLD			SILVER			FOREX		
290.69 ▼	Sensex	49,902.7	₹1 ▲	24 carat (1 gm)	₹4,565	₹1,000 ▼	Per kg	₹73,000	▲ Dollar		73.16
77.95 ▼	Nifty	15,030.15	₹1 ▲	22 carat (1 gm)	₹4,665	₹1 ▼	Per gm	₹73	▲ Euro		89.40

B'desh per capita income beats India

The neighbouring country claims average income at $2,227, higher than India's $1,947 in FY21

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @New Delhi

INDIA has technically slipped below Bangladesh in terms of per capita income as the neighbouring country reported its per capita income at $2,227 in the financial year 2020-21—over 9 per cent jump from $2,064 in 2019-20. Latest official data show that India's per capita income reached $1,947.417, thanks to the sharp contraction in the economic growth due to Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent nationwide lockdown.

Planning Minister of Bangladesh MA Mannan placed the statistics at a virtual cabinet meeting held with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair, reported the national dailies in Bangladesh. "Our per capita income stands at $2,227 in the fiscal year 2020-21, but the previous fiscal year's per capita income was $2,064. So, the growth rate is 9 per cent," the Bangladesh cabinet secretary was quoted as saying.

"It's merely a temporary phenomenon. Bangladesh is more a destinationation of labour intensive exports but that can't keep on driving the growth engine faster than India's. Once the pandemic recedes these will crank up growth. I would put it as more of a statistical anomaly and of course India shooting on its feet with some useless policies. But this will come to pass," an economist working with a foreign financial service firm said on the condition of anonymity.

When the World Economic Outlook data was released by the International Monetary Fund in October last year, it had also projected Bangladesh to surpass India in terms of per capita GDP (at current prices) in dollar terms in 2020. That time, too, it had sparked a row.

Former chief economic advisor Arvind Subramanian, had then said that the numbers are not comparable. That's because "market exchange rates are not appropriate for welfare comparisons across time and countries because they may not adequately reflect domestic inflation and/or productivity growth. More appropriate basis is GDP at constant, purchasing power parity exchange rates. This shows India ahead and despite Covid's more adverse impact in 2020, it is likely to remain so," said Subramanian.

It's merely a temporary phenomenon. Bangladesh is more a destinationation of labour intensive exports but that can't keep on driving the growth engine faster than India's. — Economist

CORPORATE DEBT

One-time-settlement a legitimate way to avoid liquidation under bankruptcy law

K T JAGANNATHAN

THE recent decision of the creditors to drop bankruptcy proceedings against Siva Industries and Holdings by accepting the one-time settlement (OTS) offer from its promoters has set the tongues wagging with some section alluding to some kind of wrongdoing.

However, given the fact that the spirit of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) lies in the resolution of corporate debt and not in liquidation per se of the debt-ridden defaulting company, the decision of the creditors makes ample sense.

The offer made by the promoters is higher than the liquidation amount. This out-of-court deal may have triggered quite an interest in varied circles for assorted reasons, but the creditors (which include IDBI, Central Bank, LIC and others) have played by the book in clearing the deal.

Previously in IBC, there had been no provision for the withdrawal of an application filed before the NCLT (National Company Law Tribunal) except as provided for in Rule 8 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy (Application to the NCLT) Rules of 2016. Under this rule, NCLT could permit the withdrawal of the application on a request by the applicant prior to its admission.

Subsequently, Section 12A was inserted through an amendment Ordinance dated 6 June 2018. This gives the adjudicating authority power to allow withdrawal on application by CIRP applicant with 90 per cent voting share approval of CoC (committee of creditor) in such a manner as "prescribed". In the case of Siva Industries and Holdings Ltd, the creditors cleared the out-of-court settlement with more than 90 per cent voting share approval of CoC. The clearance under 12A requires a much larger voting share approval (90 per cent) unlike the resolution plan which needs 66.67 per cent voting share approval by CoC.

It is gleaned from informed sources that the deal is a civil settlement. The 12A settlement, to be sure, doesn't fully absolve the promoters of their responsibilities vis-a-vis their past actions. This is not the case in a resolution plan, which provides resolution applicants (Section 29A of the IBC bars promoters from acting as resolution applicants) a far greater shield for the past decisions or actions of the company under corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP).

Nevertheless, the 12A option is intended to ensure that the company survives to live another day and perhaps carry on longer. That 12A is included in IBC is an indication that liquidation could at best be the avoidable last resort.

The one-time-settlement must be looked at from the prism of what is called the opportunity cost in economics. If banks don't settle for that, what do they gain or lose? They may or may not get the desired money. Any auction during pandemic times like the one we are now currently undergoing is likely to result in very poor realisations. Liquidation would result in not just the usual liquidation haircut, but also a long period of realisation. Settlements, on the other hand, usually have a much shorter implementation timeline when compared to resolution plans.

How will the Siva Industries and Holdings Ltd's episode play out? The action of the company's creditors will be debated until the cows come home. The fact, however, is that the 12A option is legitimately available to it. Indeed, it is within the confines of rule. Will this development trigger a new kind of dialogue with promoters to accelerate debt recoveries? Last year, in the midst of Covid-19, more than 60 per cent of the NCLT cases ended up in liquidation under IBC.

Well, 12A settlements should be read in this context as well.

(The writer is a senior financial journalist based in Chennai)

Adani Green to buy 5GW renewable assets from SB Energy in ₹25.5K cr deal

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @Chennai

ADANI Green Energy, the renewable power unit of the Adani group, said on Wednesday that it is buying 100 per cent of renewable energy major SB Energy in a deal that values the company at $3.5 billion, or around ₹25,500 crore.

SB Energy is owned jointly by Japanese investment giant Softbank and India's Bharti Group. Softbank owns an 80 per cent stake and Bharti the rest. The takeover of SB Energy will make Adani Green Energy the world's largest solar energy firm and is the largest such deal in the Indian renewable segment so far. Along with SB Energy's assets, Adani Green will have a portfolio of 24.3 gigawatts.

SB Energy has a portfolio of 4,954 MW (4.95 GW) of solar and wind assets spread across four states in India, of which 1.4 GW is currently operational and the rest is in the project pipeline. All of SB's projects are backed by 25-year power purchase agreements.

"AGEL signed share purchase agreements for the acquisition of 100 per cent interest in SB Energy India from SoftBank Group and Bharti Group," the company said in a statement, adding that the target portfolio consists of large-scale utility assets with 84 per cent solar capacity (4,180 MW), 9 per cent wind-solar hybrid capacity (450 MW) and 7 per cent wind capacity (324 MW). "This acquisition is another step towards the vision we stated in January 2020, wherein we laid out our plans to become the world's largest solar player by 2025... The renewable energy platform that we are building will lay the foundation for attracting several other global industries that are increasingly looking to reduce their carbon footprint...," said Gautam Adani, Chairman, Adani Group.

Softbank's CEO Masayoshi Son said that as the Softbank group "continues its transition to a global investment holding company focused on accelerating the deployment of artificial intelligence, it believes now is the right time to bring in the Adani Group to help drive the next phase its India growth".

TODAY'S STOCK PICK

Current Price ₹285.45

Target Price ₹365

OEL

The recent surge in COVID cases and resultant lockdowns pose near-term risk to revenues. However, once the situation normalizes, we believe Orient Electric Ltd (OEL) is best placed to capture pent-up demand with its strong manufacturing and distribution capabilities. We forecast a revenue / EBITDA / adj. PAT CAGR of 18%/16%/20% over FY21–23E. We value OEL at 45x FY23E EPS. Our longer term thesis indicates a reduction in the margin differential between OEL and major FMEG peers.

— Motilal Oswal Securities Limited

Disclaimer: The views and recommendations made above are that of the individual analyst or broking company, and not that of *The New Indian Express*.

NCLT directs DHFL lenders to consider ex-promoter's offer

DIPAK MONDAL @New Delhi

IN a curious turn of event, the Mumbai Bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has asked creditors of distressed housing finance company Dewan Housing Finance Corporation ltd (DHFL) to consider an out-of-court settlement offer of the NBFC's former promoter. The adjudicating authority has given the lenders ten days time to consider the offer. The matter will be heard next on May 31.

Ex-promoter of the DHFL — Kapil Wadhawan — has apparently offered to pay ₹91,158 crore to the lenders, which include State Bank of India, Canara Bank, NHB, Union Bank of India, etc. This offer is better than Piramal Group, which has emerged as the highest bidder with ₹35,500 crore for the whole loan portfolio of DHFL. The NBFC is the first financial institution to be put under the corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

The NCLT's order asking the committee of creditors (CoC) to consider Kapil Wadhawan's offer comes as a surprise as the CoC has approved Piramal's resolution application by 90 per cent vote share. According to sources close to the development, the CoC has already submitted a certification that Piramal's bid has been approved.

The order also came as a surprise as Kapil Wadhawan and his brother Dheeraj Wadhawan are already being investigated in a number of cases including the Yes Bank fraudulent case. A senior lawyer, on the condition of anonymity, even questioned the ability of Wadhawan to pay ₹91,000 crore. Besides, there are many legal points on which experts find the NCLT order untenable. Under the IBC, only an applicant which has moved the insolvency petition against a corporate debtor is allowed to file an application of withdrawal under Section 12A of the IBC. However, in this particular case, it is the RBI which has moved the insolvency application against DHFL.

The insolvency application against DHFL was moved by RBI in November 2019. The home loan firm owes ₹87,000 crore to creditors.

Offer nitty-gritty

Wadhawan had offered a settlement proposal of ₹91,158 crore in December last year ahead of the final round of bid submission. While the CoC did not consider this offer, Piramal Group emerged as the highest bidder with ₹35,500 crore for the whole loan portfolio of DHFL.

EXPRESS READ

Bajaj, Tata Motors extend warranty

New Delhi: Bajaj Auto on Wednesday said that it has extended the free service period until July 31, 2021 of all its brands in India in light of the second wave of the Covid 19 pandemic and the consequent lockdowns or travel restrictions. The free service period of vehicles expiring between April 1, 2021 and May 31, 2021, will now be extended until July 31. Similar extentions were also announced by Tata Motors. It has has extended warranty period by one month for those due between April and June.

WhatsApp asked to withdraw privacy policy update

BISMAH MALIK @Bengaluru

THE Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (Meity) has sent a new notice to WhatsApp asking the Facebook-owned messaging platform to withdraw its controversial privacy policy. Calling its new privacy policy "differential" in nature, the IT ministry notice stated that the update "undermines the sacrosanct privacy policy of the country, data security and user choices causing harm that rides the interests of the citizens".

"As you're doubtlessly aware, many Indian citizens depend on WhatsApp to communicate in everyday life. It is not just problematic, but also irresponsible for WhatsApp to leverage this position to impose unfair terms and conditions on Indian users, particularly those that discriminate against Indian users vis-a-vis users in Europe," the new notice read.

In a communication dated May 18, the IT ministry has given WhatsApp seven days time to respond to the new notice, failing which "all necessary steps in consonance with the law" could be taken against the platform. Meanwhile, Whatsapp has issued a statement

saying that it will continue to engage with the government and that the policy update will not impact the privacy of personal messages."While majority of users who have received the new terms of service have accepted them, we appreciate some people haven't had the chance to do so yet. No accounts were deleted on May 15 and no one in India lost functionality of WhatsApp either. We will follow up with reminders to people over the next several weeks," WhatsApp noted.

Experts say that the government must now draft a law, for the industry as a whole, which protects user privacy and it is unfair to target a single platform. "WhatsApp or any other platform should not be singled out and such decisions must be norm based to ensure legal consistency," said Kazim Rizvi, founding director of public policy think tank, The Dialogue.

Royal Enfield to recall 2.37 lakh bikes over defect

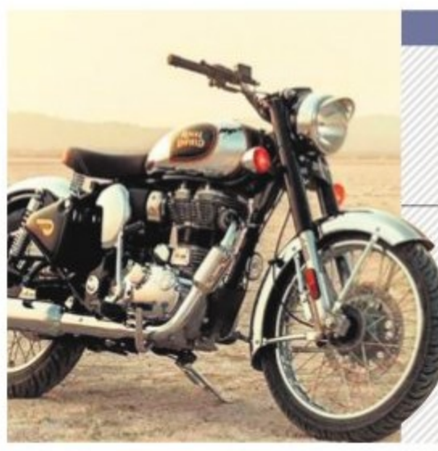
ARSHAD KHAN

ROYAL Enfield (RE) will be calling in close to 2,36,966 motorcycles of the Classic, Bullet and Meteor models as it has discovered a defect in bikes' ignition coil that reduces vehicle performance and can cause misfiring and electric short circuit. Meteor motorcycles manufactured and sold between December 2020 and April 2021 and the Classic and Bullet sold between January and April 2021 will be recalled across seven countries including India.

Royal Enfield is the world's largest bikemaker in the mid-size engine category. In recent years, the automaker has successfully penetrated dozens of markets with its iconic brand and earned successful reviews for its bikes. Analysts say that a recall of this size may affect the brand value of RE for a limited time period.

"We would like to reiterate that we have very stringent sourcing protocols and that all our motorcycles are rigorously tested to global validation standards of quality and durability," RE said in a statement.

The automaker estimates that less than 10 per cent of these motorcycles will require replacement of the part. RE added that the defect was discovered during routine internal testing and the issue has been identified and isolated to specific batches of material sourced from their external supplier between December 2020 and April 2021 "The issue is rare and does not impact all motorcycles manufactured during the above mentioned period... in keeping with safety regulations and as a precautionary measure, Royal Enfield has decided to undertake a proactive, company-initiated recall of select motorcycles models produced in the above mentioned time period," RE added.



FAULTY PART

2,36,966
Number of units to be recalled

Models
Meteor, Classic & Bullet

Countries
India, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, Australia, New Zealand and Malaysia.

RBI tells banks to quickly roll out Covid reliefs

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @New Delhi

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday met heads of public sector banks to ensure that the recent measures announced by the central bank are implemented in the "right earnest". He also urged banks to enhance the resilience of their balance sheets while tackling the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

"The governor acknowledged the important role being played by public sector banks in extending various banking facilities including credit facilities to individuals and businesses," RBI said in a statement.Other issues discussed include current state of the financial sector; credit flows to different sectors including to small borrowers; progress in the implementation of covid-19 resolution framework 1.0; monetary policy transmission; and the implementation of covid-related policy measures. The meeting was also attended by deputy governors M Rajeswar Rao, Michael D Patra, M K Jain and T Rabi Sankar.

The RBI, on May 5, had announced a series of liquidity measures to help banks support the healthcare infrastructure and small borrowers impacted by second covid wave including a special three-year special long-term repo operation (SLTRO) of ₹10,000 crore for the worst-hit small finance banks.

Rising crude oil prices boost Indian Oil Q4 profit

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @Chennai

A substantial rise in crude oil prices gave Indian Oil Corporation's net profit a solid boost in the quarter ended March 31, 2021, with the state-run oil refining and marketing major recording inventory gains of ₹8,622.25 crore during the period. The company's standalone net profit came in at ₹8,791.9 crore for the quarter, compared to a net loss of ₹5,185.32 crore during the corresponding period of last year and 49 per cent higher than the ₹4,916.6 crore recorded in the previous quarter ended December 2020.

Inventory gains are made when the value of crude oil stored by the company rises in tandem with market prices, while inventory losses happen when market prices of the stored crude falls. Over the period under review, International Brent crude oil prices rose around 23 per cent. The result was a 52 per cent jump in inventory gains from the ₹5,622 crore recorded during the previous quarter. The company had recorded an inventory loss of ₹744.6 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous year. The company also recorded a robust rise in revenue at ₹1.63 lakh crore against ₹1.40 lakh crore in the corresponding quarter of last year and ₹1.46 crore in the previous quarter ended December 2020.

Indian Oil's gross refining margins (GRM), the amount of money the company makes from processing a barrel of crude, saw a jump during both the quarter and the full fiscal year—coming in at $5.64 a barrel in FY21 against $0.08 in FY20. In the March quarter, GRM stood at over $10, said IOC Chairman S M Vaidya.

On the impact of the second wave of the pandemic on fuel demand, Vaidya said that it has not been as severe as the first wave. "Demand destruction... is very much there but not to that extent," he added. According to the chairman, the second wave so far has resulted in petrol and diesel demand falling by around 15-20 per cent compared to the 49 per cent plunge in April 2020 after imposition of the nationwide lockdown.

Demand destruction is there, which has also reflected in refinery runs... But when it (fuel demand) will return to normalcy is a very difficult question to answer — S M Vaidya, chairman, IOC

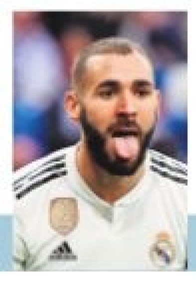
Restaurants' body NRAI seeks support, rental waiver of malls

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @New Delhi

TAKING into consideration the interests of the severely impacted food and beverages industry in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) has initiated a dialogue with mall owners to resolve the bilateral concerns. In an open letter to the mall owners, NRAI has expressed two concerns — a complete waiver of rentals and common area maintenance fee (paid to malls) and a revised revenue sharing model for the period when restaurants are operating under localised curbs.

Seeking their urgent intervention to help the ₹4.25 crore beleaguered industry, which is has seen a host of closure without income and relief measures, the association said has also asked for a no minimum guarantee rent for six months post opening. "We are certain that the business will take several months to normalise post opening. "Businesses have much depleted resources now and it will take several months to normalise," NRAI wrote to 138 malls.

Benzema recalled by France for Euro 2020



France coach Didier Deschamps recalled forward Karim Benzema after nearly six years out for his alleged part in a 'sex tape" scandal, including the Real Madrid star in his squad for the European Championship. The 33-year-old Benzema played the last of his 81 games for Les Bleus in October 2015, scoring twice in a friendly against Armenia.

BCCI SGM on May 29 to decide on T20 WC venue and IPL

VENKATA KRISHNA B @Chennai

THE Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has called for a Special General Meeting on May 29 to "discuss the upcoming cricket season in view of the pandemic situation prevailing in India." The meeting holds significance with the BCCI needing to take a huge call about hosting the T20 World Cup scheduled for October-November. Also among discussion will be the upcoming domestic season and the IPL 2021, which stands suspended mid-way through the tournament.

As reported previously, the United Arab Emirates is being considered as the safe option to host the World Cup. But it will be seen as a big setback for the BCCI. The International Cricket Council (ICC) is supposed to take a decision on the venue in its meeting in June and all things suggest that the BCCI will ask for more time. Before it conveys its decision to the ICC, the BCCI wants to hear from the state units too as such decisions need the support of its members.

The BCCI is ready to present the state units with a couple of options with the primary one being to keep the T20 World Cup at home. But that would mean the BCCI will have to restrict the number of venues to three or four as against the nine it has planned. The second option is to stage the T20 World Cup in the UAE, but treat the tournaments as their own, which might dent India's image. It is understood that not all state units are keen on this, but should the BCCI feel it is not safe to play the tournament in India, it should leave it to the ICC to decide on the host venue. That would mean in case the event is moved to the UAE, India doesn't necessarily remain as hosts, even technically.

Meanwhile, with regards to resuming the suspended IPL, the BCCI is understood to have started exploring a possible window before the T20 World Cup. With Ashes schedule out and Australia playing Afghanistan on November 17, the chances of hosting the IPL after the World Cup is all but ruled out. The only remaining option is to find a window before the global event and the BCCI is understood to have opened talks with the other member boards to see if the Future Tours Programme can be altered in any way.

It is learnt that the BCCI has started back-channel communication with the England and Wales Cricket Board whether the upcoming five-match Test series in the UK can be reduced to four. That would provide one more additional week for the BCCI to host the event, but whether other member boards will release their players still remains a big question.

For this to materialise, the BCCI is even planning to advance its scheduled home limited-overs assignment against South Africa and New Zealand. The white-ball team that is heading to Sri Lanka will get to play these two series too.

GLOVE AFFAIR WITH CARE

Relaxed with safety measures in ASI, Pune, Mary targets Olympics via Asian meet

INDRANEEL DAS @Chennai

IT'S been a stop-run-stop-run season so far as Mary Kom's training and competitions are concerned. The travails of pandemic-related travel restrictions, a sudden bout of dengue and suspension of the women's national boxing camp due to covid positives in the team hampered her training. Keeping fit during lockdown, as she confessed, was not a problem but lack of sparring partners and lack of tournaments have given her moments of anxiety.

Mary, however, has dismissed them as just flashes — something inevitable and not to be brood upon. Now, after a four-week forced break, the multiple world champion is back in practice, waltzing across the canvass sparring whenever she can. "It is good to be back in practice," she said from the Army Institute in Pune on Tuesday.

Safety had been a concern and Mary felt to get that demon off her back, one had to feel secured. "Safety is very important now and I feel ASI, Pune, is safe because of its restricted access and secured environs," the mother of three said. "Once I feel assured, it is easy to concentrate."

Mary and her ilk have been haunted by Covid. There's a lingering fear of infection even in secure environs. All the boxers including Mary have been training separately as a safety precaution. "I'm feeling comfortable here and the authorities are very helpful and have been providing whatever we require." The team is expected to come back to the same place after the Asian Championships in Dubai later this week.

It's only been a few days since she resumed training after completing quarantine. And she is already at it full pelt, even training with boys from higher weight categories. It's something she's been doing it for the best part of two decades. Now, at 38, limbs move a trifle slower coupled with a slower reaction time. Experience tends to take over.

Mary's coach Chote Lal Yadav, who had been patiently hearing us chat, chips in with his expertise. "We have to chalk out a plan until the Olympics," he said. "Sparring is crucial and since ASI has boxing teams practicing, it was easy to get a couple of sparring partners," he said. They are definitely young and agile and above Mary's (51 kg) body weight. "They are in the range of 55-56kg," he said.

Fighting against heavier boxers who are agile would help Mary, felt the coach. Mary felt her coach has been wind beneath her wing.

"There are moments when I get tired and I need a push, Chote Lal is there," she giggles. Even at this age, after hundreds of bouts, she felt the need of someone who can push her. "The technique where I am going wrong what needs to be done, it's the coach who takes care," she said.

Ready for continental meet

Mary's target this Olympics has been that elusive gold. And the Asian Championships in Dubai is the perfect platform. Top boxers have entered in the continental meet where Mary has excelled. Her five gold and one silver in seven appearances is testimony to her dominance. This time, however, she is looking beyond medalling.

"Competitions are necessary to gauge performances," said Mary. "The Asian meet will have the best from the sport and it would benefit us tremendously. The event will help us get that much-needed competition...."

Full story: newindianexpress.com

Rai bullish about bullseye prospect in Tokyo

ASHIM SUNAM @Bengaluru

INDIA'S veteran archer Tarundeep Rai is no stranger to the Olympics having represented the country in Athens (2004) and London (2012). He returned back empty-handed on both instances, but he is sensing a positive vibe this time around — compared to the previous Games he featured — as he prepares for Tokyo at the Army Sports Institute in Pune.

The man from Sikkim is set to hang his bow and arrow after the quadrennial event, which means Tokyo provides him a final opportunity at winning the decorated Olympic medal. If Rai manages to finish on the podium in Japan's capital, it would be a perfect ending to his 24-year career. And with the mega event just over two months away, the archer is confident about the men's recurve team success.

The new-found confidence has deep roots in the way his teammates Pravin Jadhav and Atanu Das go about it in training. More importantly, both of them are quality archers. When you add Rai's experience, they form a solid trio. In fact, they booked India's Olympic quota in June 2019 after their impressive showing in the Archery World Championships, where they clinched silver. The trio will also get a shot at the individual event.

"If you look at the men's team competition in Tokyo, I can say that the chances of India winning a medal are quite high. I look at Pravin and Atanu in training, they are so self-motivated. They are desperately hungry for a medal. They have understood the reason as to why they are spending hours here in training. Likewise, I have also been giving my 100 percent in training," Rai told this daily.

It is interesting to note that the team failed to win a medal in Archery World Cup Stage 1 in Guatemala last month. They will be keen to shine in Stage 3 in Paris, France in June. "It is going to be the last international meet before the Olympics. It will be of equal importance as the Tokyo Olympics. You can say that it is a dress rehearsal before the Olympics and you will also get to know how much you have prepared and where you stand. Doing well will give you more confidence," said Rai, who also believes that all three archers can deliver in the individual event at Tokyo, but it "comes down to how you perform on the given day."

Rowers' Porto exposure trip cleared by SAI

FIROZ MIRZA @Chennai

IN a big relief for the Indian rowers, Arvind Singh and Arjun Lal Jat, the Mission Olympic Cell on Tuesday cleared their Portugal exposure trip. As was reported by this newspaper, the Rowing Federation of India (RFI) has requested SAI to approve the exposure trip for the duo, who recently qualified for the Tokyo Olympics. "We are grateful to SAI as it has been very cooperative and accepted our request for the trip," Rajlaxmi Singh Deo, RFI president, told this daily.

The next hurdle, however, will be obtaining visas for the trip. The Portugal Embassy has been closed in the country due to the surge in Covid cases. "We are in touch with the Portuguese club, which will host our rowers. The club has requested the Portugal Embassy and Consulate to accept our application for visas. We hope we get the desired result," added the RFI chief.

Meanwhile, the double sculls' rowers along with their coaches have reached the Army Rowing Node in Pune for the camp. They are expected to resume training soon. "The camp was earlier scheduled to begin on May 18. However, it will now commence in a day or two," said Deo.

EXPRESS READ

Shafali promoted to Grade B in contracts list

CHENNAI: The Board of Control for Cricket in India on Wednesday announced the annual central contracts list for the women cricketers for the period from October 2020 to September 2021. Shafali Verma has been promoted to Grade B (₹30 lakh) after her consistent performances in the T20 format including the World Cup last year. Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandhana and Poonam Yadav are in Grade A (₹50 lakh). Mithali Raj and Jhulan Goswami are in Grade B.

Akhil in AMR driving academy for third time in a row

BENGALURU: Bengaluru based racer Akhil Rabindra made it to the list of the Aston Martin Racing Driver Academy third time in a row for the 2021 class. Akhil is currently competing for AGS Events Racing team at the European GT4 Championships.

5 Goa stars in India squad

GOA: Five members of FC Goa's first-team squad have been called up for Indian national team duty for the upcoming World Cup qualifiers set to take place in Qatar next month. Brandon Fernandes, Adil Khan, Dheeraj Singh, Glan Martins and Ishan Pandita will travel as part of the 28-member provisionary squad.

Massive victory for Chelsea in PL

LONDON: Chelsea beat Leicester 2-1 to move third in the Premier League on Tuesday. The 8,000 crowd saw the Blues keep a place in next season's Champions League in their own hands thanks to second-half goals from Antonio Rudiger and Jorginho.

TAMIL NADU CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION
Head Office, 12, THAMBUSAMY ROAD, KILPAUK, CHENNAI - 600 010
Ph.No. (044) 26426773 Email id. : tncsc.tn@nic.in
CIN : U15137TN1972SGC006157

E-TENDER NOTICE

No. QC2/003372/2021 Dated: 19.05.2021
E-Tender No.: TNCSC/21-22/ET/04

Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation invites online electronic tenders for **"THE SUPPLY OF DISINFESTATION CHEMICALS MALATHION 50% EC AND ALUMINIUM PHOSPHIDE TABLETS"**

Complete e-tender document can be viewed, downloaded and uploaded through **https://www.mstcecommerce.com/eprochome/tncsc** from **20.05.2021 to 18.06.2021.**

The bidders have to participate in online bidding only with Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of Class-III.

For Registration and further details contact MSTC Limited.

Phone : 25222842 I 25251910 / 25261005 e-Mail : mstcsro@mstcindia.co.in

Last Date for Online Submission : 18.06.2021 up to 2.00 PM
Tender Opening Date & Time : 18.06.2021 at 3.30 PM

DIPR/1581/Tender/2021 MANAGING DIRECTOR

KARNATAKA POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
CIN : U85110KA1970SGC001919

No.: IBOCM/Statutory Auditor Date: 19.05.2021

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
(Through e-Procurement Portal only)

Bids are invited in English from Bidders for **"Empanelment of Chartered Accountants for Statutory Audit of M/s. Baranj Coal Mines Private Limited".** The Bid Document can be downloaded from the GoK e-Portal: **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in** from **19.05.2021** onwards. The last date for receipt of the completed Bids: **17:00 hours IST on June 09, 2021.** Further details can be had from the office of **The Superintending Engineer(MINES) KPCL, No. 82, Shakti Bhavan, III Floor, Race Course Road, Bangalore - 560 001, Karnataka.** Mobile No.: **9449598901** Phone Number: **080-22203894,** Fascimile Number: **080-22203894,** Email ID:**semineskpcl@gmail.com** Website: **www.karnatakapower.com e-portal helpdesk / Hp help desk: 080-25501216 / 080-25501227.**

KARNATAKA STATE POLICE HOUSING & INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
59, Richmond Road, (Gen K.S. Thimmaiah Road)
Bengaluru-25. Ph: 080-25584102 / 25594893
Website: www.ksphc.org, e mail: eecontractksphc@gmail.com

No. EE/KSPH&IDCL/CNT/TND/2021-2022/75 Date: 18.05.2021

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER

KSPH&IDCL invites online tender through e-procurement portal **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in** for the following works:

i) Supplying and laying of 11KV Feeder line with HT Cable to Police qtrs Campus KR Puram Bangalore. Contract Period : 6 months (including monsoon)

Class of Electrical Contractor–Super Grade Electrical Licensed Contractor.

The details such as Tender Fee, EMD, Tender Documents etc., are available on e-Procurement Portal from **26.05.2021.**

"KSPH&DCL reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids without assigning any reasons."

Note: Henceforth any changes/modifications in the tender will be updated only on e-Procurement portal.

Sd/-
DIPR/DDU/BCPL/388/2021-22 Executive Engineer - Contracts I/c

HAVE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19? CALL APTHAMITRA ON 14410
Wear Mask | 6 Feet Follow Physical Distancing | Maintain Hand Hygiene

QuoteExpress DON'T WATCH THE CLOCK; DO WHAT IT DOES. KEEP GOING
SAM LEVENSON

TAMIL NADU GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LTD.
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS (E-TENDERING PROCESS)

Sl. No.	Tender Inviting Authority	Specification No	Total
1	SE / Betterment Thermal	01	1
	TAMIL NADU TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LTD.		
2	SE / Transmission - II	T-2187	1

For details of works/Procurement/Due date of submission/opening, viewing and downloading of e-tenders, please visit website, www.tangedco.gov.in, www.tantransco.gov.in, www.tenders.tn.gov.in, www.tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app. DIPR/1566/Tender/2021

Government of Karnataka
Rural Water Supply & Sanitation Division, Davanagere
No.: EE:R.D.W.&S.D.:D:A.E-2:/JJM Tender/2021-22
Date: 17.05.2021

Short-Term Tender Notice
(Through e-Procurement)

On behalf of the Governor of Karnataka Itemwar tenders are invited through e-procurement portal in KW-forms as per rules of the Department from registered, eligible contractors also registered in e-procurement for works of Drinking Water Supply Scheme approved for Honnali, Harihara and Jagaluru Taluks in Davanagere District under Jal Jeevan Mission Scheme for the year 2020-21. Last date for submission of filled tenders through e-procurement portal: 06.06.2021 up to 5.00 PM. Further details can be obtained from telephone No. of this office: 08192-262126 or www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in

ವಾಸಾಇ/ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ/93/ ಎಂಓಎ/2021–22
Sd/- Executive Engineer, R.D.W. & S. Division, Davanagere

CENTRAL ORGANISATION FOR RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION
Website: www.core.indianrailways.gov.in
Fax No.: 0532-2408826, Email: ohe1.core@gmail.com

CORE-HQ-ELECTRICAL/CORE TENDER DOCUMENT

Tender No.: ELCORE-OHE-Gr-256A-Mod-1 **Closing Date/Time:** 11/06/2021, 15:00

CAO/RE acting for and on behalf of The President of India Invites E-Tenders against Tender No. ELCORE-OHE-Gr-256A-Mod-1 Closing Date/Time 11/06/2021, 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through only payment modes available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.

1. NIT HEADER

Name of work:- "Design, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 25KV, 50 Hz, Single Phase, AC, Electrification Works in Abhayapuri (excl)-Goalpar Town-Kamakhya (excl) 2nd Line Section (Phase-II) of Gr. 256A of Rangiya Division of Northeast Frontier Railway under RE Project New Jalpaigudi, Total 157 RKM/160 TKM.

Bidding type:- Two Stage Reverse Auction	**Tender Type:-** Open
Bidding System:- Two Packet System	
Tender Closing Date/Time:- 11/06/2021, 15:00	
Date/Time of Uploading Tender:- 18/05/2021, 14:03	
Pre-Bid Conference Required:- No	**Pre-Bid Conference Date/Time:-** Not Applicable
Advertised Value:- 539929943.33	**Tendering Section:-** OHE
Bidding Style:- Single Rate for Each Schedule Item	**Bidding Unit**
Earnest Money/Bid Security (Rs.):- 0.00	**Validity of Offer (Days):-** 60
Obtain Bid Security Declaration in lieu of Bid Security:- Yes	
Tender Doc. Cost (Rs.):- 0.00	**Period of Completion:-** 18 Months
Contract Type:- Works	**Contract Category:-** Expenditure
Bidding Start Date:- 28/05/2021	**Are Joint Venture (JV) firms allowed to bid:-** Yes
Ranking Order For Bids:- Lowest to Highest	
Expenditure Type:- Capital (Works)	
Auto Elimination rules applicable:- Yes	**Minimum Decrement (%):-** .2
Initial Cooling Off Period (HH:MM):- 04:00	
Subsequent Cooling Off Period (HH:MM):- 00:20	
For Complete details please see IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in	

PR-25-2021 Dy. CEE/OHE-II/CORE/PRAYAGRAJ
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KOCHI METRO RAIL LIMITED
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4th Floor, JLN Stadium Metro Station, Kaloor, Ernakulam-682017
Ph: 0484-2846700

E-TENDER

1. Supply and Installation of HVAC Spares in Kochi Metro Stations and Depot.
Tender ID: 2021_KMRL_423260_1
Bid submission date: 16.06.2021 @ 17.00 Hrs

2. Track Maintenance Works for the section Aluva to Petta & Muttom Depot
Tender ID : 2021_KMRL_423342_1
Bid submission date: 09.06.2021 @16.00 Hrs

Tender documents can be downloaded from www.etenders.kerala.gov.in / www.kochimetro.org
Further corrigendum & addendum will be published only on websites

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala - 147001.
Corporate Identity No. : U40109PB2010SGC033813, Website : www.pspcl.in
(Contact No: 0175-2921547)

Tender Enquiry No. (RFS No.) 28/PSPCL/IPC/SOLAR/250MW/2021/ET-2 Dated: 18.05.2021

Office of Dy. CE/IPC, Thermal Designs, T-8, Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala-147001, Invites bids for purchase of 250 MW solar power through competitive bidding process (followed by e-reverse auction) from grid connected solar photovoltaic power projects to be set up anywhere in Punjab. For detailed NIT and tender specification please refer to **https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ltsp/index.jsp** from **21.05.2021, 3:00 PM** onwards.

Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at **https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ltsp/index.jsp only.**

234/C-193-21-5/19/2021
76155/12/260/2021/4670

Government of Karnataka
Office of The Executive Engineer, Panchayat Raj Engineering Division, Haveri
Email : eeprednhvr@gmail.com Tel No. 08375-232454
No. EE/PREDn/HVR/PB-5/Tender/2021-22/ Dated : 19-05-2021

E-Procurement Tender Notification

Zilla Panchayat, Haveri through Executive Engineer, Panchayath Raj Engineering Division, Haveri on behalf of Governor, Govt. of Karnataka invites the E-Portal Tender as per KG-1 from the eligible and approved OEMS, Dealers of OEM, Contractors registered under E-Portal to supply four wheeler garbage vehicles under SWACHH BHARAT MISSION PROGRAM details are as follows. Details can also be obtained in www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in

Sl. No	Indent Numbers	Brief description	Unit	Total Quantity required	Estimate Cost Rs. (in lakhs)	EMD in Rupees	Delivery Schedule
1	RDPR/ 2021-22/ IND2237	Package:13 SUPPLY OF 4 WHEELER GARBAGE VEHICLES BS6 WITH CUSTOMIZED OPEN BOX TIPPER WITH PARTITION INCLUDING PUBLIC ANNONOUNCEMENT SYSTEM (Savanur Tq: Tavaramellihalli, Huralikuppi, Jallapur, Ichangagi, Tondur, Mantrodi, Teggihalli)	Nos	7	38.50	77,000/-	Delivery in 15 days from the date of LOI/ Work Order.
2	RDPR/ 2021-22/ IND2238	Package:14 SUPPLY OF 4 WHEELER GARBAGE VEHICLES BS6 WITH CUSTOMIZED OPEN BOX TIPPER WITH PARTITION INCLUDING PUBLIC ANNONOUNCEMENT SYSTEM (Savanur Tq: Chillurbadni, Kadakol, Hesarur, Yalavigi, Huvinasigli, Kunimellihalli, Hiremaralihalli)	Nos	7	38.50	77,000/-	Delivery in 15 days from the date of LOI/ Work Order.
3	RDPR/ 2021-22/ IND2239	Package:15 SUPPLY OF 4 WHEELER GARBAGE VEHICLES BS6 WITH CUSTOMIZED OPEN BOX TIPPER WITH PARTITION INCLUDING PUBLIC ANNONOUNCEMENT SYSTEM (Shiggaon Tq: Hotanahalli, Dundasi, Narayanapur, Andalagi, Chandapur, Hosur, Madli, Bada)	Nos	8	44.00	88,000/-	Delivery in 15 days from the date of LOI/ Work Order.
4	RDPR/ 2021-22/ IND2240	Package:16 SUPPLY OF 4 WHEELER GARBAGE VEHICLES BS6 WITH CUSTOMIZED OPEN BOX TIPPER WITH PARTITION INCLUDING PUBLIC ANNONOUNCEMENT SYSTEM (Shiggaon Tq: Kyalakonda, N.M.Tadas, Basavanal, Hiremallur, Hanumarahalli, Kabanur, Hunagund)	Nos	7	38.50	77,000/-	Delivery in 15 days from the date of LOI/ Work Order.

1) Stating date to downloading blank tender form in e-procurement portal : **19-05-2021** (2) Last date for uploading completed tender form And documents e-procurement documents through online : **02-06-2021** upto 4.00 PM (3) Date of Technical bid opening (if possible) : **04-06-2021** @ 5.00 PM (4) Date of Financial bid Opening (if possible) : **07-06-2021** @ 11.00 AM

More details can be had from the office of the undersigned and also through our website http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in by clicking List of Tenders which will link to all Dept. works list.

DIPR/HVR/MCA/48/2021-22 Sd/- Executive Engineer, P.R.E. Division, Haveri

Zombie fires that linger under the winter snow in the forests of the Northern Hemisphere tend to re-ignite after hotter summers, a study said, warning that climate change may make them more common in the near future

They are called "zombie" fires because they apparently "rise from the dead", these overwintering blazes can survive even when the temperature outside drops far below zero, making containment all the more hard

EXFILE • RESEARCH

Faster transmission

As we explore the worlds beyond the realms of our universe, scientists are developing tools to transfer data as quickly as possible back to the earth. Radio is considered useful but with spacecraft targetting to venture out of our Solar system, newer means of communications are being discovered and tested. Here's a look at one such way NASA feels will help in communication

LASERS

Even the data our spacecraft and rovers are sending back has evolved over the ages. There are instruments to capture high-definition data like 4K videos. Understandably, missions will need quicker ways to transmit back to earth. NASA feels, with laser communications, it can significantly accelerate the data transfer process and empower more discoveries.

1.2 GB
per second speed with which NASA's ILLUMA-T will transfer data to LCRD, which will send the info to ground stations at the same rate

This kind of communication systems are ideal for missions because they need less volume, weight, and power. Less mass means more room for other science instruments, and less power means less of a drain of spacecraft power systems. NASA says these are all critically important considerations when designing and developing mission concepts

"LCRD will demonstrate all of the advantages of using laser systems and allow us to learn how to use them best operationally. With this capability further proven, we can start to implement laser communications on more missions, making it a standardized way to send and receive data." Principal Investigator David Israel at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland said

10-100 times
Laser communication will enable up to 10-100 times more data transmitted back to Earth than current radio frequency systems.

9 weeks
With radio signal, it would take roughly nine weeks to transmit a complete map of Mars back to Earth

9 days
With lasers the same package would take about nine days

HOW IT WORKS

Both radio waves and infrared light are electromagnetic radiation with wavelengths at different points on the electromagnetic spectrum. Like radio waves, infrared light is invisible to the human eye, but are used in our daily lives like in television remotes and heat lamps. Missions modulate their data onto the electromagnetic signals to traverse the distances between spacecraft and ground stations on Earth. As the communication travels, the waves spread out.

HOW LASER DIFFERS

The infrared light used for laser communications differs from radio waves because the infrared light packs the data into significantly tighter waves. In other words ground stations can receive more data at once because it is more concentrated. According to NASA, laser communications are faster as well as can transmit more data

RISK

Laser communications terminals in space use narrower beam widths than radio frequency systems, providing smaller "footprints" that can minimise interference or improve security by drastically reducing the geographic area where someone could intercept a communications link. However, it needs to be precise and telescope pointing to a ground station must be exact when broadcasting from thousands or millions of miles away. A deviation of even a fraction of a degree may miss its target

LASER COMMUNICATIONS RELAY DEMONSTRATION

Located about 22,000 miles above Earth, LCRD will be able to support missions in the near-Earth region. It will spend its first two years testing laser communications capabilities with numerous experiments to refine laser technologies to help us understand about potential future applications

GROUND STATIONS

The initial experiment phase will leverage the mission's ground stations in California & Hawaii as simulated users, allowing NASA to evaluate the atmospheric disturbances and practice switching support from one to another

After the experiment phase, LCRD will transition to supporting space missions, sending and receiving data to and from satellites over infrared lasers to demonstrate the benefits of a laser communications relay system. The first in-space user of LCRD will be NASA's Integrated LCRD Low-Earth Orbit User Modem and Amplifier Terminal (ILLUMA-T), which is set to launch to the International Space Station in 2022. The terminal will receive high-quality science data from experiments and instruments onboard the space station and then transfer this data to LCRD at 1.2 gigabits per second. LCRD will then transmit it to ground stations at the same rate

PHARMA LOBBY PRESSES FOR VACCINE FORMULA

Says it's the only way to inoculate world's adults by year-end; French return to cafe culture as EU allows vaccinated travelers

COVID-19

GENEVA/PARIS: Leading pharmaceutical organisations on Wednesday pressed for urgent measures to share coronavirus vaccines globally and inoculate the world's entire adult population by the year-end.

While advanced countries have made progress with vaccination programmes, shots "are not equally reaching all priority populations worldwide", eight major drug organisations and associations noted in a joint statement.

"Manufacturers, governments, and non-governmental organizations must work together to take urgent steps to further address this inequity," they said. An estimated 11 billion vaccine doses could be produced by the end of 2021, compared with 2.2 billion at the end of May, according to the groups that are based in Europe and the United States.They include IFPMA, PhRMA, efpia, abpi, Vaccines Europe, Bio, and ICBA, which based their estimates on data provided by the science research group airfinity. To reach their target, the lobby group urged stakeholders to boost vaccine sharing, in particular via the Covax programme that provides them to poorer countries, and to raise production levels.

That could be done by scaling up output of raw materials and components, dismantling trade barriers and supporting movement of skilled workers, the statement said. Coronavirus vaccines are badly needed by developing countries, but the global programme Covax remains sorely underfunded and faces significant supply shortages, the groups noted.

Revelers at a Paris cafe after restrictions were eased in the city on Wednesday | AFP

Covax intended to ensure the vaccination of 20 percent of participating country's populations by the end of the year, but is currently said to be short by around 190 million doses.

Meanwhile, the French on Wednesday joyfully made their way back to cafes, cinemas and museums as the country loosened restrictions in a return to semi-normality after more than six months of Covid-19 curbs.

Cafes and restaurants with terraces or rooftop gardens can now offer outdoor dining, under the second phase of a lockdown-lifting plan that should culminate in a full reopening of the economy on June 30.

It's about being with others and indulging in the things that make up life in Paris, like going to a restaurant or taking the kids to an exhibition

- A patron

Museums, cinemas and some theatres are also reopening after being closed for 203 days. Bad weather across much of the country failed to dampen the spirits of customers who beat a path back to their favourite cafes and cultural haunts from the early morning.

"It's a form of liberation," Didier Semah, a music producer, told AFP jovially as he sipped an espresso with a friend on the terrace of Felix Cafe in eastern Paris. For Sabine Dosso-Greggia, a 45-year-old accountant who was having a mid-morning cigarette and coffee at the next table, it was about enjoying the "small daily pleasures" again. "It's about being with others and indulging in the things that make up life in Paris, like going to a restaurant or taking the kids to an exhibition," she said. In the western city of Rennes, Patricia Marchand, the manager of the Cafe des Feuilles, said she had reservations even for aperitifs.

DNA tests lined up to find Columbus' origins

HISTORY

MADRID: Researchers on Wednesday said they will restart a DNA study of the remains of Christopher Columbus to try to settle the question of where the explorer came from. Was Columbus from the Italian port city of Genoa, as most historians believe? Or was he Spanish or Portuguese? There are several theories.

Five centuries after his death in 1506, this study could finally end the debate over the geographic origin of the navigator whose voyages on behalf of the Spanish monarchs between 1492 and 1504 opened the door to Europe's colonisation of the Americas. The results of this "pioneering study" are expected in October, Jose Antonio Lorente, a professor of forensic medicine at Granada who is leading the investigation, told a news conference.

Launched in 2003, the study achieved a major breakthrough after DNA tests established that bones in a tomb in the cathedral in the southern city of Seville were those of Columbus. But it was suspended in 2005 because the research team felt that DNA technology at the time required a significant sample of the bones of the explorer "to obtain very little information", said Lorente.

The research team decided to preserve the bones "until there was better technology" which can use small bone fragments as is the case today, he added.

The DNA of small bone fragments from Columbus which are stored at a vault at Granada University in southern Spain will be compared to those from the remains of suspected family members of the explorer.

It will also be compared with the DNA of people alive with the same family name as Columbus from the different parts of the world where he is believed to have come from.

While Lorente hopes the results will be "totally conclusive", he acknowledged researchers were not certain they could obtain genetic samples from all the bones "in sufficient quantity and quality to reach a conclusion".

"The goal is to try to offer as much information as possible for historians and experts to interpret," he added.

The study is being carried out with the University of Florence in Italy and the University of North Texas in the United States.

Pathbreaker scientists get Finnish 'Nobel'

SCIENCE

HELSINKI: Two British chemists who developed a super-fast DNA sequencing technique that paved the way for revolutionary healthcare advances were on Tuesday awarded Finland's version of the Nobel science prizes. Cambridge University professors Shankar Balasubramanian and David Klenerman took home the 1 million euro ($1.22 million) Millennium Technology Prize for their work over 27 years.

The pair's Next-Generation DNA Sequencing technology (NGS) "means huge benefits to society, from helping the fight against killer diseases such as Covid-19 or cancer, to better understanding crop diseases and enhancing food production," the Technology Academy Finland, which awards the biennial prize, said in a statement. Twenty years ago, the first attempt to read the sequence of 3.2 billion letters that makes up the human genome took a decade and cost over a billion dollars. Thanks to Next Generation Sequencing, it can now be performed in one day for just $1,000.

LEAP OF FAITH

A woman jumping on the esplanade des Droits De L'homme at the Trocadero Square in front of the Eiffel Tower, where a giant artwork by French street artist and photographer Jean Rene is on display | AFP

FACT OF THE MATTER

Greenland fast losing ice cover

CLIMATE

Greenland is becoming darker and warmer due to a weather pattern that is pushing fresh snowfall away from its ice sheet, a study said. A reduction in the amount of light-colored snow leaves more old and dark snow exposed on the surface, which causes the ice sheet to absorb more heat and melt faster. "As snow ages, even over hours to a few days, you get this reduction in reflectivity," said Erich Osterberg, an associate prof at Dartmouth College and co-author of the paper. Osterberg and colleagues attributed the decrease in snowfall to atmospheric blocking, in which persistent high-pressure systems hover over the ice sheet for weeks at a time.

Russia studies its sunk sub

RADIATION

Russia has sent an expedition to survey radioactivity at the wreckage of a Soviet nuclear submarine which sank in the Norwegian Sea three decades ago, Equipped with a nuclear reactor and two nuclear warheads, the Komsomolets caught fire in April 1989 while in international waters 500 km from Norway. The wreckage has since been kept under close monitoring. A joint Russian-Norwegian expedition in 2019 found the submarine was leaking radiation up to 800,000 times above normal levels. On Wednesday, the environmental agency said a new expedition had departed a day earlier to study radiation levels

BREATHE EASY

Poland taps into sun with homegrown tech to wean away from smog-triggering coal

CLIMATE

KRAKÓW: A solar boom is helping Poland take a big step towards weaning itself off coal as a new homegrown photovoltaic technology is poised to be a game-changer in harnessing the power of the sun. Poland has long trailed other members of the European Union in solar power, but recent government subsidies have seen solar panels pop up on roofs nationwide at an unprecedented pace.

Rarely associated with blue skies, the country is instead known for the heavy smog smothering cities and villages dependent on coal, which in Poland is dubbed "black gold".

But with coal still meeting close to 80 percent of Poland's energy needs and its mines set to shut by 2049 under an European Union plan to cut emissions, the country has been forced to seek and subsidise greener solutions. In the southern town of Skawina, one of the first residents to swap out his old coal boiler for solar panels was Andrzej Machno, a 74-year-old former innkeeper.

"The town council subsidised solar energy, so we seized the opportunity. Others followed. It was an excellent choice," he told AFP while playing with his grandson in the family garden. "We can now breathe better in Skawina," said Machno, whose town had for decades been marked by pollution from a now defunct aluminium plant.

"We're seeing a scramble for photovoltaic micro-installations in Poland," Ryszard Wnuk, a renewable energy expert at the National Energy Conservation Agency (KAPE), told AFP.

At the moment around 70 percent of Poland's solar farms are still small, consisting of equipment with an average power of 8 kilowatts.

But in five years, Poland went from having only 187 megawatts (MW) in installed photovoltaic capacity to 3,935 MW in 2020 thanks in part to the boom in rooftop installations. Last year, the country of 38 million saw 155 percent growth in the sector, compared to a worldwide average of 22 percent, according to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

Wnuk attributes Poland's enthusiasm for solar to generous public subsidies and the option to pump surplus energy generated by rooftop panels into local grids.

"Ten years ago, no one in Poland knew how to pronounce the word photovoltaic!" Dawid Zielinski, CEO of the firm Columbus Energy, told AFP.

Launched seven years ago, the company is at the forefront of Poland's fledgling green energy push. Employing 3,500 people, it is listed on the Warsaw Stock Exchange and has ambitions to go global.

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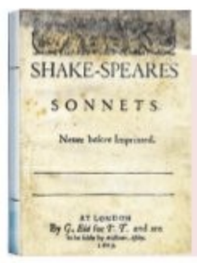
THURSDAY



DAY'S DIARY

Shakespeare's sonnets

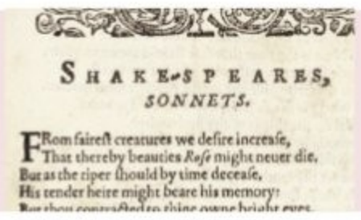
William Shakespeare's collection of 154 poems in the English sonnet form was first published on this day in 1609

AGAINST HIS WILL

It is said that the book of sonnets was published by one Thomas Thorpe and against Shakespeare's will. But scholars argue that there was nothing illegal about that

FAMOUS SONNETS

The sonnet form and the themes and rhetoric of romantic poetry occur frequently in *Romeo and Juliet*, most famously at Romeo and Juliet's first kiss


SHAKE-SPEARES,
SONNETS.
FRom fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauties Rose might never die,
But as the riper should by time decease,
His tender heire might beare his memory:

COPIES

Thirteen copies of this edition survive. One copy is held at the John Rylands Library at The University of Manchester, which was sold for five pence

'I felt special playing a village belle'

PG 4

After Disha Madan and her whole family recovered from Covid, they decided to look after the people who are a part of their lives

Do unto others...

MONIKA MONALISA

Most people have been directly or at least indirectly affected by the second wave of Covid infections that are sweeping across the country. While many people have volunteered to directly help people in need, many others are quietly looking after people who are part of their lives. Sandalwood Actor Disha Madan is one of them.

Eight weeks ago, Covid-19 became a scary reality for Disha, when her whole family got infected one by one. It included her son, who is nearly three now. While Disha and her husband recovered in home isolation along with their son, her parents and in-laws had to be hospitalised.

"It was a difficult phase, especially to see your loved ones suffer. I suppose it affects your recovery too," says Disha. During that time, they got their domestic workers tested as well. They luckily did not test positive.

Just as the whole family was recovering, and getting back on their feet, the government imposed a statewide lockdown to contain the spread of the disease. That's when they decided to look after the people who worked in their apartment.

Last week, they distributed ration kits among the workers, including the watchman, laundry person and others, consisting of basics such as rice, pulses, cooking oil etc.

Disha says that the idea came from the whole family, particularly her parents. "My mother wanted to do something about it. So, we got in touch with a local grocery store," says Disha.

Disha with her husband and son

While many celebrities and influencers are helping in larger ways, she says that having a toddler at home makes it both difficult and risky for her to do more.

The actor says while a lot is being done for frontline workers and people who are out of jobs now, her heart goes out to blue collar workers who are still going to work despite the severity of the Covid situation.

"For them earning a salary, which will help them run their homes and support their families, is very important, which I totally understand. This was my way to help them a little bit so that their food stock for a week or two is taken care of," says Disha, adding that her domestic workers are still turning up for work by choice, with all pandemic precautions taken.

"Sometimes it's the work that keeps many of us going during a time of crisis," she adds. Disha and her husband are working out ways to donate money to causes that ensure that the funds reach the needy.

Disha Madan

> Distrbuting ration kits was my way of helping them a little bit so that their food stock for a week or two is taken care of
>
> Disha Madan, Sandalwood actor

KNOW YOUR CITY

Arun Prasad, city-based history researcher, unravels interesting facts about Bengaluru in this weekly quiz series. So it's time for you to find out how familiar you are with the city, beyond its heritage buildings, IT parks and the pub culture.

THE QUIZ WILL BE PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY

Send answers to **bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com** with the subject line **'Know Your City Quiz'**

Correct answers and names of first three respondents with right answers will be featured in CE on Thursday.

THE RIGHT ANSWERS ARE

1. Ulsoor 2. Ramanagara 3. Chikkaballapur

FIRST THREE TO GET IT RIGHT

1. Rama Rao
2. Kavya Chamera
3. Murali SL

The work of Indian craftsmen underpins the global fashion industry but they get little recognition
PIC CREDIT: FATHERLAND

An artisan at Tharangini workshop brings the brand's prints to life; (below) The Garuda sari was created early in 2021, after Fatherland put Covid protocol in place

Hands that build visions

STYLE AND THE CITY
Sarayu Hegde

DID you know, when Jennifer Lopez sashayed down the runway in her jungle print Versace dress, paying homage to her iconic green grammy look, the embroidery on that dress was done by artisans in Mumbai?

"Its rarely acknowledged, but luxury European brands depend heavily on Indian craftsmen ship to bring their creations to life," says- Indian origin, New York-based, conscious luxury designer Roopa Pemmaraju. In a series of social media posts, she urges global fashion houses to step up and support Indian ateliers and their artisans who have played a pivotal part in the creation of their garments.Our couture-level karigars are the backbone of our fashion industry and are integral supply chain for many international fashion houses like Gucci, Valentino and Dior.

"The process of creating design on garments is incomplete without skilled karigars. Organisations big and small, that create pret and couture are dependent on them. Artisans are the hands to the designer's vision," says ace designer Raj Shroff. His textile-based, ever-evolving brand Ravage, is synonymous for its signature asymmetrical cuts and appliqué work.

Sharing time between Bengaluru and parts of West Bengal, textile revivalist/artist Ron Datta, founder of Fatherland realised that the concern during lockdown was to help his weavers stay afloat. "Most of our communications happened mostly over phone and through courier. This was a very new method of working we've adopted since last year. We haven't been sitting with the weavers like before, but we could look into the weaving videos and progress on our work," says Dutta.

With a mission to promote and preserve ethically made, organic and sustainable hand block printed fabrics, Tharangini, Bengaluru's oldest textile studio was established in 1977. Having worked with various brands globally including Story Mfg and Anthropologie, they are the first artisan studio in India to earn ISO 26000 certification for social and environmental responsibility. "After the first wave and the monsoon, we were able to restore full production only towards the end of 2020. The second wave has now put us back in lockdown. During this time we were able to get vaccines and medical insurance for all of the artisans above the age of 45. With delayed production, and disrupted supply chains, and the onset of the monsoon again, our hope is that we tide through our 44th year," says founder Padmini Govind.

The New York Times recently reported that Indian fashion artisans faced extreme distress in this pandemic. With no demand, orders cancelled and stockpiles of inventory, the custodians of India's rich art find their livelihoods at an absolute standstill. The survival of our craft clusters stands critical to our economy as the textile industry is the second largest source of employment in our country with a workforce of approximately 22 lakh craftsmen. Most homegrown fashion brands work with artisans and local talent. In supporting them, we contribute to the growth of the indigenous economy and ensure our native creativity survives. There has never been a better time to step up, support and stand vocal for local!

Passing time

Hitha Chandrashekar let fans see a small glimpse of the relationship she shares with her husband Kiran Srinivas. They took a video of themselves answering embarrassing questions meant for couples. It included questions like, 'Who overthinks everything?', 'Who showers less?', 'Who is always eating?' and more. Check out her Instagram for some surprising answers.

INSIDE

Learn more about Covid and black fungus

CITY READ

Free tele-consultation service for Covid patients

Aster DM Healthcare is extending its support to Covid -19 patients and caregivers in India by facilitating free medical advisory services through video tele-consultation. Direct video consultation services will be provided where doctors will respond to queries as well as create awareness. The services can be availed from Sunday to Thursday between 1:30 Pm - 5: 30 Pm (IST). To avail this, download Aster e-Consult app and select 'Covid Helpline'

Hotel launches staycation package

Four Seasons Hotel Bengaluru has crafted staycation experience called the 'Tranquility Package'. It includes breakfast in the room, WiFi to remain connected and a choice of lunch or dinner. One night in a superior room is priced at ₹4,999. The package is valid till May 31. Call 4522 2222 for details.

'WE ARE HERE TO PUSH BOUNDARIES'

Filmmakers Asif Kapadia and Amit Kumar discuss their recently released Amazon Prime Video series, The Last Hour

RAM VENKAT SRIKAR

ASIF Kapadia and Amit Kumar make this interaction exude the vibe of friendly conversation, and it helps that their own association goes back a long way—specifically to when they first met in film school as "poor, young, skinny students," like Asif puts it. Amit, whose directorial Monsoon Shootout premiered at the Cannes in 2013, is now back with a new web series, The Last Hour, with Asif, the director of Oscar-winning documentary, Amy, serving as an executive producer. In this conversation, the duo touch upon their long association and the challenges in financing independent cinema:

EXCERPTS FROM THE CONVERSATION.

The Warrior, Asif's first film, had the film's protagonist setting out on a spiritual journey to the Himalayas. The Last Hour too is set in the Himalayan landscape, and with this, do you feel that both your lives have come a full circle?

ASIF: Everything is connected. We started our filmmaking journey in '97 and it took us from the deserts of Rajasthan to the scenic valleys of the Himalayas. As someone who spent his entire life in London, my fascination with these humongous mountains is natural. Unfortunately, I visited the shooting spot only once due to travel complications, and even during my visit, I was only a distraction to all the hard work that was being put by the team. It was an amazing experience to return there.

AMIT: I think that's the beauty of life. We do arbitrary things over the course of our lives and then realise that such discrete events form a beautiful pattern without our cognisance. I find the mountains mysterious and supernatural. The scale of these million-year-old, gargantuan creations is beyond human comprehension, and taking pictures with drone cameras or watching them from an airplane barely does justice to their glory. The idea to shoot in the Himalayas was proposed by my co-creator and co-producer Anupama Minz, who is also my wife. Although the producer in me was concerned about the logistics, the location resonated with me.

Despite enjoying success with your documentaries, do you find working on fiction to be a more liberating experience as a storyteller?

ASIF: When I make documentaries, like on Ayrton Senna (Senna) or Amy Winehouse (Amy) or Diego Maradona (2019), we try to encompass their life story in feature-length runtime. They have lived fascinating lives, bestowing us ample material to play with. It is the equivalent of adapting a Fyodor Dostoevsky novel into a 90-minute film. I enjoy sculpting a structure, setting a beginning and an end, using the high and lows of their life to build drama. The challenge with fiction is, where do you go with a blank piece of paper? I like the idea of working with restrictions and breaking rules. With Senna, I wanted to break the conventional pattern of sports documentaries. When we made The Warrior, there was a definite idea of what a British film or Indian film should be. I tried to bridge them and came up with my version. We are here to push boundaries, change what you think is normal, and exemplify that it's possible to go beyond the widely accepted norms in storytelling. I think that's what Amit has done with The Last Hour.

Amit Kumar and Asif Kapadia

WHAT WHEN WHY WHERE

SUMMER CAMP

xQ creativity is organising a virtual summer camp for kids between the age group 9-14 years. Moderated by TV personality Cyrus Broacha, the camp will train children in stop motion animation, video editing, graphic designing and more. **When:** Ongoing **Details:** Insider.in

IMPROV STORYTELLING

Enjoy online improv storytelling sessions every Wednesday. The event is hosted by Kaivalya Plays which focuses on giving a platform to artistes and other individuals to present stories, characters and scenes spontaneously. **Details:** insider.in

GROOVY TUNES

Sign up your children for a programme that will make them dance to the tunes of joyful music. The entertainment session focuses on relaxing kids by getting them to groove to 30 minutes of music. **When:** May 21 onwards **Where:** Zoom, Details: bookmyshow.com

BIRYANI BINGE

ITC Hotels expands its food delivery network with its second cloud kitchen in Bengaluru, and catering will be handled by the kitchens of ITC Windsor. Their biryani and pulao collection will be available to order for the residents of Whitefield through food aggregator Swiggy.

LISTEN TO STORIES OF ROMANCE, TRAGEDY AND MORE, VIRTUALLY, WITH STORYTELLER MEERA VENKATESAN WHEN: MAY 23 ONWARDS TICKETS: INSIDER.IN

Covid care dabba

Grand Mercure Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall launches a care dabba, a Covid-19 care meal subscription plan. The initiative is aimed at providing healthy balanced meals to quarantined individuals at a subsidised price. **For details:** Call 9513289992

Weight loss camp

Yoga and spiritual guru Grand Master Akshar has launched a seven-day free online weight loss camp. The sessions can be accessed between 5 pm and 6 pm each day on his YouTube channel.

Triathlon Sessions

Triathlon coaching team - Life of Tri is conducting a month-long virtual sports session for athletes. The sessions will focus on cycling and indoor fitness routines followed by interactive sessions with experts from various fields like swimming, running, cycling, nutrition and more. **When:** May 20 onwards, **Details:** Life of Triathletes website

Musical Tour

Indian Musical Experience is organising a virtual musical world tour for kids. The summer camp aims to introduce children to the world of global music and stories and learn songs in five different languages. **When:** May 24, 10:30 am **Details:** bookmyshow.com

Online Fun

VYOMA Artspace and Studio Theatre are organising Gurukula live which aim to give children the joy of reading comic books and listening to stories. It also includes quizzes, games, puppetry and other interesting activities. **When:** May 24 onwards, 12pm, **Details:** 7892920189

QUICK FIX

What's cooking

IN YOUR KITCHEN?
We are hungry for recipes with minimum ingredients and maximum flavours. Share your quick-fix with us, along with step-by-step photos, at cityexpresschn@gmail.com.

RUSKY TUKADE

INGREDIENTS

- **Rusk:** 1 packet
- **Sugar:** 200 g
- **Water:** 200 ml
- **Milk:** 300 ml
- **Custard powder:** 4 tbsp
- **Roasted nuts**

METHOD

- Make a syrup with sugar and water.
- Make custard with the custard powder and milk.
- Arrange a layer of rusks in a rectangular 10" dish.
- Pour sugar syrup on the rusks till they are covered.
- Spread a layer of custard over the rusks.
- Arrange a second layer of rusks in the dish.
- Pour sugar syrup on the rusks and spread a layer of custard over it.
- Arrange a third layer of rusks and pour the remaining syrup over it.
- Finally spread the custard on top. Garnish with roasted nuts
- Refrigerate. Serve cold.

— Mythili Ramaprasad, Bengaluru

FIT BIT

SUPTA BHAIRAVASANA

(RECLINING FORMIDABLE POSE)

In Sanskrit, 'supta' means reclined, 'bhairava' means formidable, and 'asana' means pose. Bhairava is also a manifestation of the Hindu god, Shiva. It is usually called Kala Bhairavasana. It is believed to activate the Muladhara (root) and Ajna (third eye) chakras. While Muladhara is associated with grounding, a sense of security and emotional stability, Ajna is with intuition and inner knowledge. It is an advanced level hip-opening yoga posture, along with powerful poses mentally and physically. Many practise under the supervision of a yoga expert. But after a few days of practise, this asana becomes quite easy to do. Almost the entire body including the spine and legs is involved in this asana, so in terms of health, it is beneficial for various body parts.

STEPS

- Select a very calm place to practise this asana.
- Try to sit with both legs spread in front or in Dandasana (Staff Pose).
- Inhale, raise your right leg and move it towards the shoulder and then around the back of the neck.
- Bring both your hands to a prayer position at the centre of the chest.
- For the full expression of the pose, the body reclines and the Drishti is toward the sky.
- You can retain the pose with normal breathing as long as you are comfortable.
- To come to Dandasana, exhale, bring the right leg slowly to the floor and relax.

BENEFITS

- Practising this pose every day makes abs stronger and toned.
- Keeps the body healthy and improves longevity.
- Regular practise of this asana gives you mental peace.
- Beneficial for all the organs of the stomach.
- The nerves coming out of the spine are also exercised very well.
- Helps in reducing obesity, especially the waist area and the fat near the thighs.

LIMITATIONS

- Recommended to do in the morning. If you are practising in the evening, give 3-5 hours gap between your practice and meal.
- Don't perform in case of high blood pressure, serious problem or injury to the spinal cord, during menstruation and pregnancy.
- It is a bit difficult, so start it with the help of a trained yoga teacher.

— by N Elumalai, PhD scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

SOUND BOARD

DARKNESS RADIO
Dave and Tim take listeners on an entertaining journey into all aspects of the supernatural, from ghosts and aliens, to monsters, mysteries, myths and legends with guest experts, experiencers and eye witnesses.
- On Apple Podcasts

THE WILD WITH CHRIS MORGAN
Taking listeners across the Pacific Northwest and around the world, host Chris Morgan explores wildlife and the complex web of ecosystems they inhabit. He also tells the stories of people working in and protecting the wild around us.
- On Stitcher

NATURE PODCAST
The Nature Podcast brings you the best stories from the world of science each week. We cover everything from astronomy to zoology, highlighting the most exciting research from each issue of Nature journal.
- On Apple Podcast

VAYADI
Vayadi is a podcast from Chennai Art Theatre. It features a range of lesser-known and spoken about topics; along with radio plays, artist profiles, technical know-how in theatre and much more.
- On Spotify

THE PERSONAL FINANCE PODCAST
Andrew Giancola from Dollar After Dollar reveals all of his personal finance, money, investing, business strategies, income sources, stock, and real estate investing tips so that you can build more wealth than you ever thought possible.
- On Spotify

POPULAR ON YOUTUBE

RX SOORI
A young gangster becomes infamous for his criminal activities in Andhra Pradesh. But things change when he falls in love with his childhood friend.
- Cast: Duniya Vijay, Ravi Shankar, Adi Lokesh

MALLA
Shiva, a florist's son, grows up to become a gangster. After his father is murdered, he sets out to take revenge against the culprits.
- Cast: V Ravichandran, Priyanka Upendra, Umashree

KEMPEGOWDA
Kempe Gowda, an honest police officer and a people's man, takes on a gangster, Armugam. However, the mafia leader has close connections with the bureaucrats, which keeps him safe against the law.
- Cast: Kichcha Sudeep, Ravishankar, Ragini Dwivedi

ANTARAVIRALLI
Sanjay and Nitya fall in love with each other despite facing opposition from their peers. They soon become intimate and Nitya gets pregnant, which causes problems in their lives.
- Cast: Prakhyuth Paramesh, Achyuth Kumar, Chikkanna

Scan this QR code to find out how your favourite celebs are coping with the lockdown.

WHAT'S ON TED TALKS

1 THE ARTIST WHO WON A NOBEL PRIZE... IN MEDICINE BY MELANIE E. PEFFER
In the 1860s, scientists believed they were on the verge of uncovering the brain's biggest secret: how the brain's signals travel through the body. Soon, a young artist sketched a bold new vision of how our brains work. Melanie Peffer details the discoveries of Golgi and Cajal.

2 WHAT CAUSES DANDRUFF, AND HOW DO YOU GET RID OF IT? BY THOMAS L. DAWSON
On top of our heads, there is a type of yeast that lives and dines on all of our scalps. Feasting constantly, it's in paradise. And in about half of the human population, its activity causes dandruff. So, why do some people have more dandruff than others? And how can it be treated? Thomas L. Dawson explores this head-scratching problem.

3 WHY DIDN'T THIS 2,000 YEAR OLD BODY DECOMPOSE? BY CAROLYN MARSHALL
From bacteria and algae to fungi and protozoa, soils are home to one quarter of Earth's biodiversity. And perhaps soil's most important inhabitants are its microbes. Carolyn Marshall digs into how soil's invisible helpers support all life on Earth.

4 HOW THEATER WEATHERS WARS, OUTLASTS EMPIRES AND SURVIVES PANDEMICS BY CARA GREENE EPSTEIN
In this fascinating talk, writer and director Cara Greene Epstein places the closing of theaters during the coronavirus pandemic in a historical context, exploring how we can use this intermission to imagine a more just, representative and beautiful world, onstage and off.

5 I LET ALGORITHMS RANDOMIZE MY LIFE FOR TWO YEARS BY MAX HAWKINS
Computer scientist Max Hawkins created algorithms to make decisions for him — and got hooked on the experience for two years. He shares how relinquishing choice sent him across the world and opened him up to the beautiful complexity and richness of life. It makes you wonder: What lies just outside your comfort zone?

NOW STREAMING

REGIONAL

ARISHADVARGA (Kannada)
An aspiring actor doubling as an amateur gigolo gets caught up in a sticky situation after accepting a surprise gift from an anonymous client. Cast: Sumyuktha Hornad, Anju Alva Naik
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

HERO (Kannada)
A barber stumbles upon his ex-lover in the home of a notoriously bloodthirsty gang leader. Misadventures ensue when he tries to help her escape with the gangster's men in hot pursuit. Cast: Rishab Shetty, Pramod Shetty
- Watch on: Zee 5

EE KATHALO PAATRALU KALPITAM (Telugu)
Three aspiring actors investigate the story of a model linked to a murder.
Cast: Pavan Tej Konidela, Babloo Prithveeraj, Raghu Babu
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

YUVARATHNAA (Kannada)
A reputed college that is now on the verge of closing due to the privatisation of the education system and political reasons. The college principal fights against privatisation and the protagonist supports his vision.
Cast: Puneeth Rajkumar, Sayyeshaa Saigal, Sonu Gowda
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

THE LAST HOUR (Hindi, series)
A mysterious young shaman, on the run protecting a secret gift, joins hands with a seasoned city police officer to hunt down a dangerous figure from his dark past; when he falls for the officer's young daughter, he is torn between duty and love.
Cast: Sanjay Kapoor, Raima Sen, Karma Takapa, Shaylee Kishen
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

All the streaming apps can be accessed on smartphones and smart TVs with Internet connection.

PHOTO PREM (Marathi)
A photophobic woman is on the journey to find a photo of herself to be put up in her eulogy.
Cast: Neena Kulkarni, Amita Khopkar, Vikas Hande
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

ANVESHANAM (Malayalam)
When Aravind learns that something unexpected has happened to his family, he rushes out to meet them in the hospital, only to find himself in an unforeseen situation.
Cast: Jayasurya, Shruti Ramachandran, Leona Lishoy
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

ENGLISH

WONDER WOMAN 1984
Though she's come into her full powers, Diana Prince maintains a low profile by curating ancient artifacts, and only performing heroic acts incognito. But soon, Diana will have to muster all of her strength, wisdom and courage as she finds herself squaring off against Maxwell Lord and the Cheetah.
Cast: Gal Gadot, Kristen Wiig, Chris Pine, Pedro Pascal
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD (series)
After escaping a Georgia plantation, Cora boards a train embarking on a harrowing trip as she seeks true freedom while being hunted by a notorious slave catcher.
Cast: Thuso Mdebu, Chase Dillon, Aaron Pierre, Joel Edgerton
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

WILD MOUNTAIN THYME
Headstrong farmer Rosemary Muldoon has her heart set on winning her neighbour Anthony Reilly's love. But Anthony seems to have inherited a family curse, and remains oblivious to his beautiful admirer.
Cast: Emily Blunt, Jamie Dornan, Jon Hamm, Christopher Walken
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

DUNKIRK

During World War II, soldiers from the British Empire, Belgium and France try to evacuate from the town of Dunkirk during an arduous battle with German forces.
Cast: Harry Styles, Cillian Murphy, Tom Hardy, Fionn Whitehead
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

SUBSCRIPTION

Amazon Prime Video: ₹129 per month

COVID AND THE BLACK FUNGUS

What you need to know about the mould, the disease it causes, who's at risk and who's not

Representative pic

DR ATHIRA RAMAKRISHNAN

As India grapples with the massive surge in Covid-19 cases, a rare yet dangerous fungal infection called 'mucormycosis' has also been on the rise, posing a great threat to those affected by the novel coronavirus and those who have recovered from it as well.

Caused by 'mucorale fungi' present everywhere in the atmosphere, mucormycosis affects the sinus cavities which are air-filled spaces behind the nostrils. In people having poor immunity, this fungus invades the nasal lining and starts a dangerous infection. It can spread to the eye or brain via blood vessels, blocking them and cutting off the blood supply to the affected area. The tissues which lose their blood supply turn black and thus the name 'black fungus'.

Mucormycosis is not a new infection. In ordinary times it occurs in 100-150 per 10 lakh individuals. But because of Covid-19, we have observed an uptick in the number of such cases. Severe Covid-19 infection increases the risk of mucormycosis. Anyone with low immunity can fall victim to this infection but it's mostly seen in diabetes patients with uncontrolled sugars, patients on cancer chemotherapy, patients who have received renal or bone marrow transplants who are on medication to suppress immunity, HIV+ people, and patients on high dose steroid medication.

Many Covid patients may require steroid medication when blood oxygen level drops below 90 per cent to treat persistent fever and to prevent lung damage. If steroids are given for a long time, it reduces immunity, increases blood sugars, and produces a state in the body which allows mucormycosis to occur. Covid-19 infection itself has been shown to cause reduced immunity and can wreak havoc in multiple organ systems.

If steroids are given for a short duration under the care of a doctor this situation can be avoided. Excessive and unregulated use of steroids for Covid patients with mild symptoms and prevalence of high blood sugar levels are the two main culprits behind the massive spread of Black Fungus. Thus, steroids must be used judiciously by observing correct timing, correct dose, and correct duration.

If you are not diabetic and prescribed a high dose of steroids, the risk of developing mucormycosis is almost nil. If you are a diabetic, please make sure your blood sugar is well-controlled. Consult your diabetes specialist and take medication accordingly if you must use steroids for Covid treatment, as this will help in avoiding complications.

Be vigilant and seek medical attention at the earliest. Do not self-medicate with steroids as they are given for severe Covid infections only. Using steroids in mild infections, in high doses, and for a long time will put people at risk of developing mucormycosis.

(The author is consultant for ENT/ otorhinolaryngology, surgical oncology, Fortis Hospital, Bannerghatta Road)

IN A NUTSHELL

- Mucormycosis affects nasal lining and can spread to the brain
- Mostly seen in people with diabetics, low immunity (people with cancer, bone marrow transplant, HIV)
- Excessive use of steroids for Covid patients with mild symptoms and prevalence of high sugar levels causing spike
- If you are Covid+ and diabetic, consult your diabetes doctor. Do not self-medicate

Get a shot at safety

EXPRESS FEATURES

WORRIED about finding a slot for vaccination? This app might sort out your concerns. VaccinateMe.in is a platform by HealthifyMe to find Covid-19 vaccination slots in real-time. It is now also available in 10 regional languages besides English, namely Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati, Telugu, Tamil, Bengali, Odia, Punjabi and Malayalam. In case a vaccination slot is not available, VaccinateMe.in also has an option where users can sign up for real-time SMS alerts as and when new slots open up.

While the website was already available in English along with WhatsApp alerts, regional languages and SMS have now been added to ensure those without smartphones can also easily access the information. In a statement, Tushar Vashisht, co-founder and CEO, HealthifyMe, said, "With the platform now available in 11 languages and slot open notifications being sent via SMS, we hope more people will use it to find vaccination slots as they become available. This service is and will remain free and we will continue to do our bit to serve the country."

NUGGETS

Google to launch AI tool to decode skin conditions

Google hopes to launch an AI-powered tool - which is a web-based application - as a pilot later this year to make it easier to figure out what might be going on with your skin. "Once you launch the tool, simply use your phone's camera to take three images of the skin, hair or nail from different angles. You'll then be asked questions about your skin type, how long you've had the issue and other symptoms that help the tool narrow down the possibilities," said Peggy Bui, MD, Product Manager, Google Health. - IANS

New RT-PCR kit better at detecting Covid strains

A newly-developed multiplex RT-PCR kit has a higher accuracy of detecting Covid 19 across the various mutant strains of the virus responsible for the global pandemic, the Ministry of Science and Technology said in a statement. "As the pandemic is going through a second wave with multiple variants, the selection of target genes in multiplex RT-PCR assay is becoming critical for accurate detection of the virus," the statement said. Even though coronaviruses make far fewer errors than other RNA viruses, the mutations in S, R, and N genes often interfere with RT-PCR assay. - IANS

Don't fall for fads that tell you to crash diet; experts say fitness is 70 per cent what you eat and 30 per cent exercise

Best foot forward

PALAK DENGLA

Have you been looking for ways to lose weight on Google? The answer is simple – follow a 'Step Diet' plan. You just have to 'move more and control portions'.

The step diet requires you to walk 10,000 steps each day. It permits you to eat most things but to cut down portion sizes by 30 per cent. Begin by walking 2,000 steps a day (15 min walk) and gradually increase the pace to 10,000 steps per day (burning a minimum of 400-500 calories). By walking on the treadmill at a speed of 4.5 mph for 30 minutes, the average individual would burn about 150 calories.

Eating consciously is important. By skipping guilty pleasures such as that extra bowl of ice-cream, a serving of aloo pakodas or Coke, one would cut down their calorie intake by 300-375 calories. Follow the 70:30 principle – i.e., fitness is 70 per cent of what we eat and 30 per cent of exercise.

The intake for a normal individual, as recommended by the USDA, is 2,000 calories/day. For a successful weight loss of 0.5-1 kg, a calorie deficit of about 500-1,000 per day is recommended. For healthy weight loss, exercise sessions should be a mix of strength training and cardiovascular training, not only cardio. Both modes of exercise burn calories, which in turn leads to stored fat being used as a source of energy.

By walking 10,000 steps a day and by making small dietary changes, we can address obesity. In the pandemic, as most citizens are advised to remain home, one tends to turn into a couch potato. Research shows that people who are leading a sedentary lifestyle (< 5,000 steps/day) or are almost inactive (<2000 steps/day), are at a higher risk of severe Covid-19.

The starvation mode

People often experience a point in their weight loss journey when the needle on the weighing scale stops falling lower and they get demotivated and give up. This phase is called 'the starvation mode' where the body tends to resist weight loss as we are eating lesser than earlier. The brain thinks that it might not get sufficient food and would have to starve and starts to conserve the food that we eat in the body. It instructs the body to store food in the form of fat, which is why weight loss plateaus after the successful shedding of a few pounds. Here, strength training is essential. It speeds the metabolism back up and one keeps losing weight steadily.

Hence, by walking 10,000 steps a day and a minimum of 15 min of strength training, at least four times a week, one can push past plateaus and achieve the ultimate goal of weight loss, instead of a fad crash diet which helps shedding more water and muscle weight (protein) initially but leads to a relapse of lost weight once diet is terminated. It is quite straightforward if followed routinely. Lace up a pair of sneakers, and put one foot in front of the other. You need to be more active!

(The author is senior physiotherapist, Aster RV Hospital)

That gut feeling

Good immunity is dependent on the health of your gut. Here's how to keep your digestive system well-maintained

DR SHARANYA S SHASTRY

Your gut feeling is always right", this saying holds good both literally and metaphorically. Food breakdown includes ingestion, digestion, absorption, assimilation and excretion. Absorption and assimilation are the crucial steps which decide our intestinal strength. Hence, paying heed to the kind of food you ingest is important. Bloating, constipation, heartburn, flatulence, nausea, and diarrhoea are common indicators of an unhealthy digestive tract. It also depends on your lifestyle that includes your meal-timing pattern, sleep timings and your activity level. Thus, an active lifestyle and a diverse and balanced diet taken in small quantities at frequent intervals, is the key to a good gut.

Five super foods for your diet

A traditional meal (roti-sabzi or rice-rasam or ragi ball-sambar or jowar roti-brinjal bharta): A combination of a cereal and a pulse (or legume) gives the best of amino acids, thus giving you a good quality complete protein along with satiety, giving you the required amounts of fibre.

Monkey jack fruit (or lakucha or vate hannu; can be consumed in fish sambar or eaten as a fruit): A hyper local fruit that is usually found in the Malnad region (tropical and warm climate) is sour and tangy. It contains copper, zinc, vitamin C and flavonoids, which are good for your skin and are an immunity booster. When dried for 3-4 days under sunlight, it can be used as a flavoring agent in fish sambar/curry.

Garlic: Inulin is the compound that is present in garlic apart from allicin which is a good prebiotic which feeds the existing micro flora of the gut. It also increases bowel movements and improves overall digestion. Research also says that it increases calcium absorption. Hence include garlic in your chutneys/curries/tadkas.

Kokum: Used frequently in Maharashtrian, Konkan and Gujarati cuisine, it is a good antioxidant and a powerful digestive aid. Kokum can be consumed as a sherbet, as a fruit, or as a substitute for tamarind in curries. It's a natural coolant which comes with a good amount of fibre, giving you early satiety.

Mangoes: The King of Fruits comes with a lot of inherent advantages. It is high in fibre, short chain fatty acids and other bioactive compounds which prevent gut dysbiosis (imbalance in the gut bacteria) that is brought about by high fat feeding. Include a mango (fruit/curry/pickle) in any form on a regular basis.

There are other options too like home-set curd/buttermilk, tender coconut water that are easily available and help in maintaining a healthy gut. Any abnormal symptoms in the body related to digestion should be consulted with a medical practitioner and dealt with through proper treatment.

(The author is a dietician at Apollo Spectra Hospital, Bengaluru)

SOULFUL

Time and continuity

Time is chronological and also psychological. Time as growth is the small becoming the large, the bullock cart evolving into the jet plane, the baby becoming the man. The heavens are filled with growth, and so is the earth. This is an obvious fact, and it would be stupid to deny it. Time as distance is more complex. "It is known that a human being can be in two different places at the same time - at one place for several hours, and at another for a few minutes during the same period."

Thought can and does wander far afield while the thinker remains in one place. "I am not referring to that phenomenon. A person, a physical entity, has been known to be in two widely separated places simultaneously. However our point is time."

Yesterday using today as a passage to tomorrow the past flowing through the present to the future, is one movement of time, not three separate movements. We know time as chronological and psychological, growth and becoming. There is the growth of the seed into the tree, and there is the process of psychological becoming. Growth is fairly clear, so let us put that aside for the time being. Psychological becoming implies time. I am this and I shall become that, using time as a passage, as a means; the what has been is becoming the what will be. We are very familiar with this process. So thought is time, the thought that has been and the thought that will be, the what is and the ideal. Thought is the product of time, and without the thinking process, time is not. The mind is the maker of time, it is time.

"That is obviously true. Mind is the maker and user of time. Without the mind-process, time is not. But is it possible to go beyond the mind? Is there a state which is not of thought?"

Let us together discover whether there is such a state or not. Is love thought? We may think of someone we love; when the other is absent, we think of him, or we have an image, a photograph of him. The separation makes for thought. "Do you mean that when there is oneness, thought ceases and there is only love?"

Oneness implies duality, but that is not the point. Is love a thought process? Thought is of time; and is love time-binding? Thought is bound by time, and you are asking if it is possible to be free from the binding quality of time. "It must be, otherwise there could be no creation. Creation is possible only when the process of continuity ceases. Creation is the new, the new vision, the new invention, the new discovery, the new formulation, not the continuity of the old."

Continuity is death to creation.

"But how is it possible to put an end to continuity?"

What do we mean by continuity? What makes for continuity?

What is it that joins moment to moment, as the thread joins the beads in a necklace? The moment is the new, but the new is absorbed into the old and so the chain of continuity is formed. Is there ever the new, or only recognition of the new by the old? If the old recognizes the new, is it the new? The old can recognize only its own projection; it may call it the new, but it is not. The new is not recognizable; it is a state of non-recognition, non-association.

- Jiddu Krishnamurti

ART IS BEYOND BOUNDARIES: VIKAS VASISHTA

The Kannada actor is overwhelmed with the kind of response he has been receiving for his Telugu debut, *Cinema Bandi*

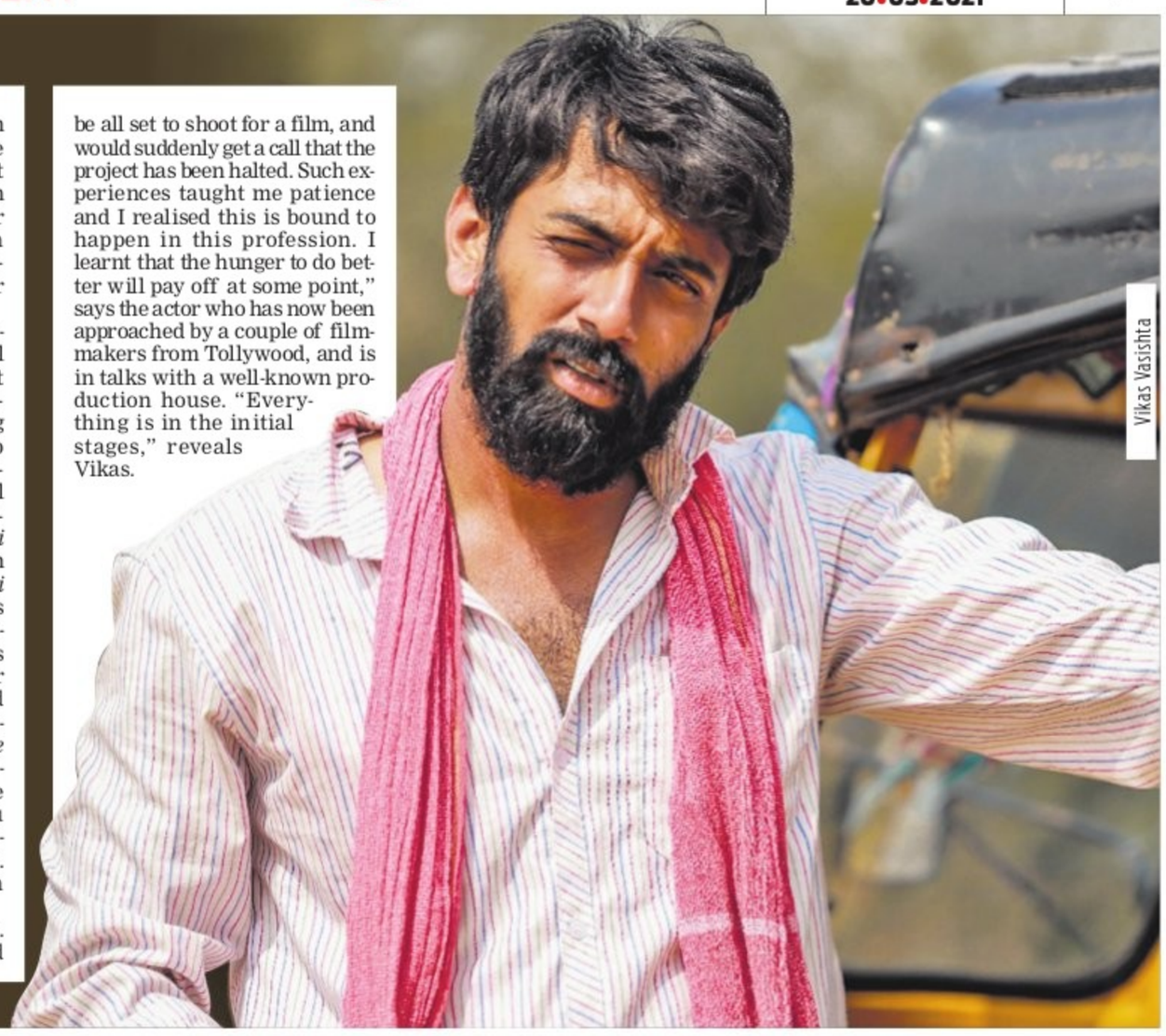
CE FEATURES

ALL spotlight is on Kannada actor Vikas Vasishta, who plays the lead in writer and debutant director Praveen Kandregula's *Cinema Bandi*. The comedy-drama has been the talk of the town, and Vikas is overwhelmed with the response he and the film have been receiving. "There is no boundary to art, and this is one example of that," he says, adding, "Apart from the recognition and popularity that I have been showered with, there is a sense of satisfaction of having been a part of such a project. We thought we have make a good film, but never thought it would turn out to be the best film. It has garnered attention from an audience across India. For being my first film in Telugu, I am immensely happy at the turn of events.

Sharing his experience of being a part of *Cinema Bandi*, Vikas says he got the role by accident. "Previously, I had associated with Praveen for a small ad shoot in a Tamil commercial. Since he knew me, he texted me asking if I knew any Telugu-speaking person. When he stressed on this casting for the second time, I discussed it in detail. When I also told him that I was fluent in Telugu, we realised that it was the perfect match," he says. The duo then did a short film which was later pitched to producers. "We even considered a mix of Telugu-Kannada slang which worked well for the film," explains Vikas.

Coming from an IT background, he admits that his initial passion was not cinema. "I don't call it 'luck by chance'," says Vikas, who wanted to do something different when his then day job didn't give him complete satisfaction. He tried his hand at a small screen project and began his acting career with *Pancharangi Pom Pom*. It was followed with serials like *Amma, Avalu, Preethi Endrenu*, and *Chakravyuha*. His latest is *Manasaare* which is being telecast on Udaya TV. He has also made a transition to silver screen, making his debut as lead in *Karaali*. He has played antagonist characters in films like *6ne Maili* and *Randhawa*. Interestingly, Vikas is a dubbing artiste and has been the voice of Allu Arjun, Mahesh Babu, and Prabas' films dubbed in Kannada. He has also dubbed for Sudeep in the Kananda version of *Eega*.

"For nine years, I struggled. There were times when I would be all set to shoot for a film, and would suddenly get a call that the project has been halted. Such experiences taught me patience and I realised this is bound to happen in this profession. I learnt that the hunger to do better will pay off at some point," says the actor who has now been approached by a couple of filmmakers from Tollywood, and is in talks with a well-known production house. "Everything is in the initial stages," reveals Vikas.


Vikas Vasishta

Leslie Odom Jr joins *Knives Out* sequel

CE FEATURES

LESLIE Odom Jr is the latest actor to join the cast of the recently announced sequel to Rian Johnson's 2019 whodunnit *Knives Out*. *The One Night in Miami* actor joins fellow newcomers Kathryn Hahn, Dave Bautista, Edward Norton, and Janelle Monae in the sequel.

Daniel Craig, who essayed the role of master sleuth Benoit Blanc in the first movie, will reprise the part in the next instalment that is bankrolled by Netflix. The streaming platform recently acquired the rights to develop two follow-ups to Knives Out in a reported $450 million deal.

Rian Johnson is returning to direct the sequel and is also producing the film with Ram Bergman under their T-Street production banner. The plot details are being kept under wraps.

Along with Daniel Craig, *Knives Out* featured a massive ensemble cast including Hollywood A-listers such as Chris Evans, Ana de Armas, Jamie Lee Curtis, Michael Shannon, Toni Collette, Lakeith Stanfield, and Christopher Plummer. The film enjoyed both critical and commercial success, with critics hailing it as one of the best murder mysteries to come out in recent times.

Odom, whose credits include *Murder on the Orient Express* and *Hamilton*, was recently seen as Sam Cooke in Regina King's *One Night in Miami* a role that garnered him an Oscar nomination for best supporting actor. His television credits include Grey's Anatomy, Person of Interest, Gilmore Girls, and House of Lies, among many others.

The pre-production of the *Knives Out* sequel is set to begin this year in Greece.

'I FELT SPECIAL PLAYING A VILLAGE BELLE'

... says Nishvika Naidu, who talks about her role in upcoming film *Guru Shishyaru*, the makers give a glimpse of her character in the upcoming sports drama

A SHARADHAA

NISHVIKA Naidu has bagged the lead in *Guru Shishyaru*, a film by Jadeshaa K Hampi. The upcoming sports drama in which Nishvika will play the female lead, and she is paired opposite Sharan. The makers had a unique way of introducing Nishvika's role, which was visible in the first look that was revealed on Wednesday, which also happened to be her birthday. The actor plays the role of Sooji and features in the role of a village belle. This is her first attempt at playing such a character. "Playing a village belle is special. It is different from our day-to-day life. Having lived in an urban surrounding, my connection with villages is limited. So this film has helped me understand rural life. I've enjoyed it although I've shot only the first schedule," says Nishvika. The beauty of wearing a half saree, feeding cows and goats, rural mannerisms are the small joys Nishvika is enjoying for her role as milkmaid.

The actor of films like *Gentleman* and *Rajamarthanda*, says that she was waiting to fetch a character like what she plays in *Guru Shishyaru*. In fact this was her mother's wish as well. "The roles that I have played previously have been very simple. This is the first time I am playing a bold girl. My character's name is Sujatha, sweetly called Sooji. Everything about her is adorable," she says.

Apart from playing a village girl, the role is all the more special because Nishvika is a huge fan of Crazy Star Ravichandran. "Though at this moment I can't reveal much about the dialogues, every line delivered by me has reference to Ravichandran. That was also fun," says Nishvika, who added that she is a big fan of Ravichandran's songs and the way he portrays the heroine in his films. "Ravichandran has a dignified way of admiring a woman's beauty. And he beautifully describes this in his songs," she says.

Guru Shishyaru is being made by Sharan's prooduction house, Laddu Cinemas. Tharun Kishore Sudhir, who is working as the creative head of the film, will also be associating as co-producer under his production house, Tharun Kishore Kreativez. *Guru Shishyaru* will have Ajaneesh B Loknath and Sudhakar Shetty handling the music and cinematography, respectively.

Nishvika is also associated with Ganesh's next, *Sakath*, directed by Suni. She will be juggling two films when she resumes shooting. Meanwhile, Nishvika has been noticed for her stunning body transformation, which she credits the lockdown. "Except for shooting for a couple of months last year, most of the time was spent indoors. Instead of wasting time, I felt that I should put all my energy into getting fit and stay in good shape. You can see the results for yourself," she says with a chuckle.

Nishvika Naidu

The actor on the sets of *Guru Shishyaru*

The Family Man new season trailer out

CE FEATURES

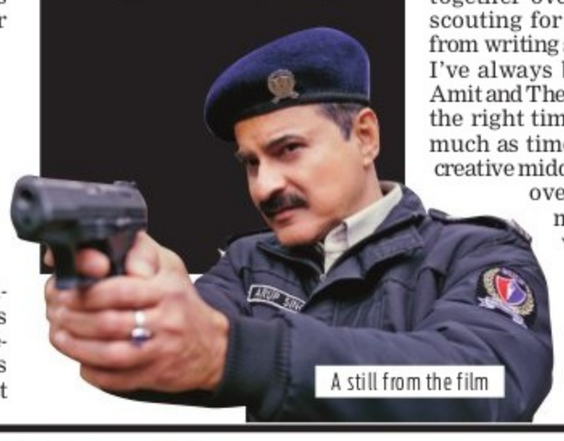
AMAZON Prime Video has released the trailer for the new season of *The Family Man. Season 2* of the show, created by Raj and DK and starring Manoj Bajpayee, will premiere on the platform on June 4.

The new season resumes with Srikant Tiwari (Manoj) as he jostles the duality of being a middle-class family man and a world-class spy. We see him rotting away in a corporate job, attending marriage therapy, and desperately missing his old life. Unable to stay put, he eventually called over to Chennai, in pursuit of a new antagonist named Raji, played by Samantha Akkineni.

The new season also marks the return of Priyamani, Sharib Hashmi and Seema Biswas. Additionally, the series features a host of Tamil actors, including Mime Gopi, Ravindra Vijay, Devadarshini Chetan, Anandsami, and N Alagamperumal.

"The wait will finally be over on 4 June as Srikant Tiwari will return with a thrilling storyline, and danger really has a new face. Samantha Akkineni, who has done a tremendous job, along with the always-fantastic ensemble cast. We are confident we have carved out an exciting season for you all, despite having to work through the pandemic," Raj and DK said.

'I'M A CYNIC'


A still from the film

Amit, you attributed the origin of Monsoon Shootout to your confused headspace after you decided to quit your corporate job and take a plunge into cinema. Is there a similar inspiration for *The Last Hour*?

Amit: I wouldn't ascribe it to a specific instance, but several building blocks from different phases of my life contributed to the idea, beginning from my childhood in Africa. Growing up, I wasn't a healthy kid, and on the doctor's advice to consume eggs, my father bred chickens. And chickens, naturally, don't have a long life, and when they died in numbers, I wondered where their personalities would go. I have always been intrigued with the concept of death and strongly believed that there must be another layer to this world. That's an element I have tried to explore in the show. The second layer is the dichotomy of beliefs. My father was practical while my mother is religious. This contrast also exists between my wife, who's realistic, and I, who believes there's something more to life and death. As she's the co-writer of this show, this helped us delve deeper into polarising belief systems.

Talk to me about Asif coming on board for *The Last Hour*.

Asif: *Well, it made me tons of money.* (laughs)

Amit: Our mental connection is such that I feel comfortable sharing all my ideas with him. I know he won't be stealing them. I pitch ideas mostly over a session of cooking in the kitchen; both The Bypass (2003) and Monsoon Shootout materialised only after passing 'Asif's kitchen test'. Likewise, The Last Hour has remained in my repository of ideas for over a decade, and I kept going back to it in every discussion. He has been involved in it from the earliest stages of development.

Asif: We have spent a lot of time together over the decades. From scouting for locations to casting, from writing scripts to editing films, I've always been associated with Amit and The Last Hour happened at the right time. I couldn't spend as much as time I wanted to, but our creative middle-ground helps. Moreover, I believe that filmmaking has migrated to virtuality, especially in the last year. It is not just communication; even the coordination is done through Zoom calls and WhatsApp text messages now. For instance, I find myself coordinating over the phone with an editor in New York, Amit in India, sound designers in London...

Amit, you had mentioned in an interview that you are cynical about filmmaking. With the backing of a streaming giant like Amazon Prime Video and independent films now finding a new lease of life on OTT platforms, are you more optimistic now?

Amit: I'm a cynic. I'm cynical about life and films. When you are in film school, you believe that the toughest part of making a film is penning a great script.

Asif: It's still challenging to fund and direct films; obligations like the attachment of a movie star, so you can reap financial benefits, continue to exist.